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WALK AND WARFARE:

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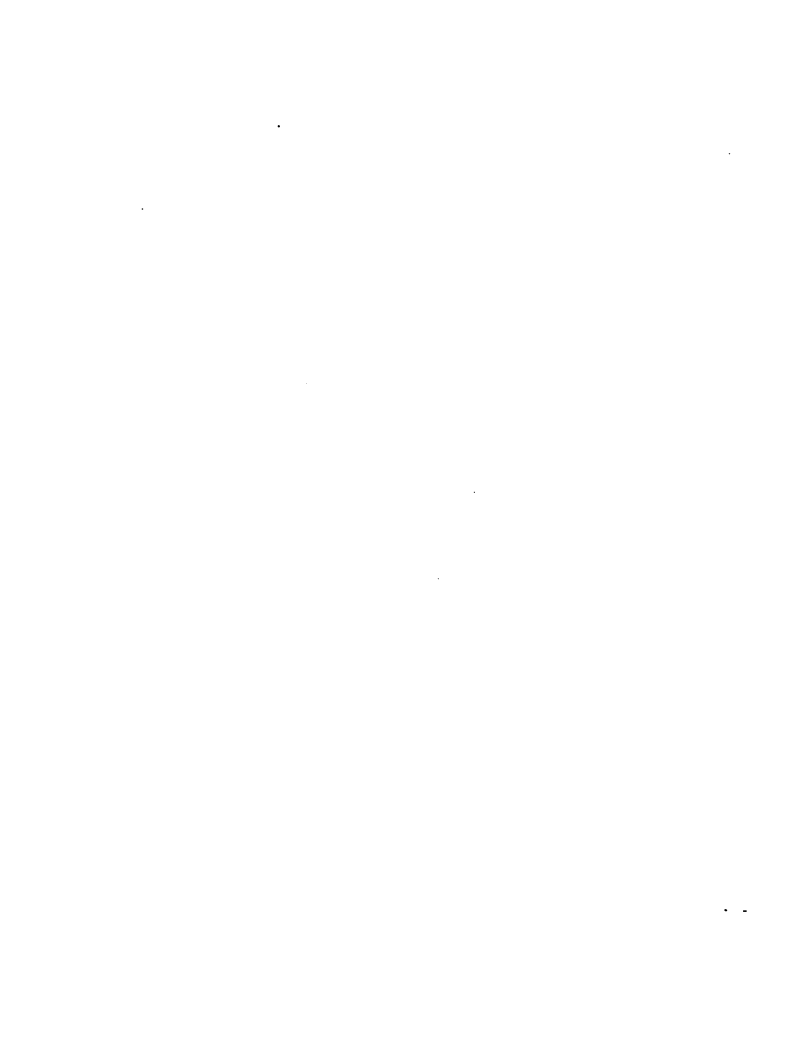
WILDERNESS PROVISION

J. DENHAM SMITH.



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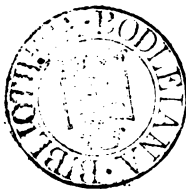
WALK AND WARFARE;

OR,

WILDERNESS PROVISION.

BY

J. DENHAM SMITH.



C. R. H. SERIES.

LONDON :

S. W. PARTRIDGE & Co., 9, PATERNOSTER ROW

1872

PREFACE.

WE rejoice to be enabled to send forth a second small volume of Mr. Denham Smith's Addresses, most of which were, in the first instance, contributed to the pages of the *Latter-Rain*, through which channel they were made the means of ministering spiritual food to thousands. The favour with which the first book, "Life in Christ," was received, induced us to issue the present volume, earnestly desiring and praying that the Lord may give His people, into whose hands it may fall, to find in its pages—which speak of the unsearchable riches of Christ—real provision for their wilderness walk and warfare, till the appearing of the great Captain of our salvation, "even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come." How sweet it is to know, that

 " Soon shall the fainting warrior,
 Soon shall the pilgrim band,
 Have fought the last great battle,
 Have reached the promised land!"

ST. JOHN'S WOOD,
Dec. 25th, 1871.

C. R. H.

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THE NAZARITE ;

OR, DIVINE SEPARATION.

“The days that were before shall be lost.”—Num. vi. 12.

A NAZARITE, beloved, was one wholly separated unto God. Daniel, in Babylon, was a Nazarite, also his companions. Joseph was a Nazarite—one, like Daniel, who never seems to have broken his Nazarite vow. But of all Nazarites there were none like *the* Nazarite. He was wholly, absolutely separated to do the will of His Father in heaven ; as perfect when occupied with publicans and sinners, as He is now that He is seated in risen glory, at the right hand of the Father.

All Christians properly are Nazarites. Their position is nothing less in God's sight, than

that they should be wholly separated unto God—to this end are they born of God ; but as all Israelites were not Nazarites, so all Christians are not living in the sweet power of conscious blessing of the true Nazarite ; but are, for the most part, is it not to be feared, forgetful, as we may say, of their Nazarite vow.

There are four things about the Nazarite which are not usually sufficiently seen.

The first is, that all the time which a Nazarite was not in his vow, was counted by God as “ *lost* ” time—lost, as we may say, from out of his true existence before God. “ And he shall consecrate unto the Lord the days of his separation ; but the days that were before shall be *lost*, because his separation was defiled,” (Num. vi. 12.) Just as time was counted no time, as to their existence, before Israel were redeemed out of Egypt ; so all the while a Nazarite was separated from his vow, or which he passed between the breaking of the vow and the renewing of it, was counted by God *as wholly lost*. In our case, all that time, beloved,

in which we are not in the realization of communion is no part of our true existence before God ; but is counted by God as lost time, and accordingly, as we shall see, with many of us, alas, how little a time, or space of time, marks our true life or existence before God.

Secondly, Nazariteship itself, as in the case of Samson, was no attainment on his part ; for it was that to which, from the very first, he was born ; born into all its rights and privileges, as one wholly belonging to and in the possession of God as his own rightful and peculiar portion. A Nazarite was born such. He was a Nazarite from his birth. (Judges xiii. 7.)

Thirdly, nothing could be more miserable than to have the mere name of a Nazarite whilst without its power. How melancholy, and how solemn ! Samson had the name of Nazarite ; but his strength had departed ; his eyes were put out. It is only the pure in heart who can see God. A man may have the name of being in communion long after his strength has departed, and he has

become weak as other men. Samson had the name; but he was the mere sport of the Philistines.

Fourthly, Nazariteship often, as in the case of Samson, when once lost, seems not to have been fully regained. Samson had strength; but he never regained his sight. Our failures and downfalls may pass away under the sweet sense of repentance before God, and of renewed forgiveness, but the remembrance will be always grievous to the soul. "My sin is ever before me."

But, you will ask, What constituted a Nazarite? The requirements of a Nazarite were, first, "He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink," (Num. vi. 3), teaching us that we are not in the power of mere natural joy. The joy of mere nature is a poor joy, and there is nothing more unseemly in a Christian than that poor, frivolous, empty hilarity, which often passes as cheerfulness or happiness. Measured by this *requirement*, *how many* are there who are quite out

of the Nazarite condition. They may be *Christians*; but they are surely not in enjoyed communion. They have none of its sweet blessed brokenness of spirit before God—none of it before men. True joy is a *divine* joy. “The joy of the Lord is our strength.” “We also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” “Whom having not seen we love, in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” Our Lord is the highest example of this. His joy consisted in His doing the will of His Father—or, more properly, in His Father Himself. For what gave Him joy? Was it the wine of any earthly root? Nay, the earth gave Him no joy. He found no rest, no portion here. Ah! He will have joy in the earth; but it is not yet. “He came to His own, and His own received Him not.” “He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” They would not have this man to reign over them. And He is still, as it were, under the Nazarite

vow ; yet He *will* drink the wine ; but it will be in the kingdom, when the vow will no longer be kept with Him or with us. We shall sit down 'with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and indulge in all joy ; for everything in us, and everything in that kingdom, will be according to God ; the things that offended having been taken utterly away.

Meanwhile, Christ *now* is our true joy—not anything here, not self, but Christ ; especially not anything of this present evil age. It is a secret known to the Christian. Its true scene is where Christ now is. He is in the Father, and we are in Him. But the Father is in heaven ; Christ is there ; we are there in Him in heaven. The disciples indeed had their joy in Him, whilst as yet He was down here ; but when they saw Him ascend, He drew their spirit after Him—as the needle always points to the north, so love directs itself to its object. We set our mind on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God ; and where, together *with Him*, we are partakers of the heavenly calling.

When the Lord passed forty days on the earth after His resurrection, the disciples were, doubtless, often agitated and unsettled, not knowing what He would do; but when He led them out to Bethany, and they saw Him ascending to where He now is—to the presence of the Father—the scene of their joy was plainly in heaven. Knowing what had occurred, “they returned to Jerusalem with great joy.” What was the secret of their joy? Was it in anything on earth? No indeed. So now with each one of us.

“The path where my Saviour has gone,
Has led up to His Father and God,
To the place where He’s now on the throne,
And His strength shall be mine on the road.”

Such is the first requirement, beloved, of a Nazarite. He is taught that his joy is a divine joy, and in that which is unseen; and you know as to how you are affected by this. The importance of it practically, is immense; for if your own soul be out of this joy, the loss is not only yours, it

affects others also. Are they low? Having lost your Nazarite strength, you have no power to elevate them; for, as a rule, you can only raise to your own height. There will be no rending of a lion, no pulling down of pillars; but you are become as weak as other men. It is this which accounts for the little power there is in service; the gospel seems taught rather than preached; men look for truth in the letter of it, and learn certainly, but largely in the abstract. I believe, as another has said, that "truth learned out of the maintenance of communion, only tends to deaden, if not to harden." Like food which, taken when there is no appetite, only weakens and encumbers, instead of strengthening, so truth taken into the mind when the affections are torpid and dead only hardens, and hinders the true power of the Spirit so much needed. Oh, beloved, for that power, and its blessedness, in us now.

But what do we understand by this second requirement of the Nazarite, viz.: "*That all the time of his separation no razor shall come upon*

his head, that he shall let all the locks of the hair of his head grow " (5) ? The hair is that which gives comeliness to the person. It indicates personal dignity, beauty. Self, and all that springs therefrom, or that would minister to it, is to be as nothing compared with God. Is it not the same truth as in Num. xix., where all our sins having been reduced to ashes in the burning of the red heifer, the scarlet and the hyssop and the cedar also are cast along with the sins into the same fire ? The scarlet indicating earthly glory, and the hyssop and the cedar all that which lies in the domain of mere nature in us, which, apart from God, is under the dominion of sin. It is a poor thing, beloved, pride of person, the mere adorning of nature ; but oh ! the secret adorning, the adorning of the soul, the affections absorbed, filled with Christ, assimilating to themselves all that is precious in God. *This* surely Daniel had, and Joseph ; and above all the blessed Lord Himself, who in the hidden parts was made to know wisdom, and the law ~~was~~ written in His heart ! "I delight to do Thy will.

O God." And the more we assimilate to Him, the more will our adorning be "*not* the outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, but the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." (1 Pet. iii. 3, 4.) All this, dear friends, is of great present interest,—as bearing, in the very letter of it, upon the vain and gaudy apparel in which, in this present evil day, the creature soon to lie in corruption, or changed into glory, is arrayed. Alas! such is but the outward sign of how the heart attaches itself to everything here, instead of living in the power of being crucified to the world, and the world unto us. The sight of death, *His* death on the cross, in rejection; and of glory, *His* glory in the presence of the Father, like which we are soon to be, is that which alone has power in closing our poor eyes to all that is here. It is in the presence of *such death* and of *such glory*, we become DEAD TO THE WORLD,

and THE WORLD IS DEAD TO US. As we sing :—

“Dead to the world, with Him who died,
To win our hearts, our love,
We, risen with our risen Head,
In spirit dwell above.

By faith His boundless glories there
Our wond’ring eyes behold—
Those glories which eternal years
Can never all unfold.

This fills our hearts with deep desire,
To lose ourselves in love ;
Bears all our hopes from earth away,
And fixes them above.”

The third requirement is in ver. 6, viz: “He shall come at no dead body”—that touching the corpse even of his father, or his mother, or his brother, or his sister, when they die, the vow is broken, and he is unclean. Was there any harm, beloved, in this of itself? Was it not natural that a child should take a last embrace of a loved mother in death, or of a loved father, ere their remains are put under the clod of the valley? None certainly! But this was God’s way of teaching separation, of

habituating man *not to touch*. And as death represents sin, self, corruption, God would instruct us in practical holiness, in a whole-hearted separation from them.

Doctrinally, if I touch self, as giving me any ground of hope, I deny the Lord that bought me ; or if I touch sin I am defiled ; even ordinances, when put in the place of Christ, as the Galatians put them, involve a separation from the Nazarite vow. They were “bewitched;” they had begun in the Spirit ; but had gone into the flesh—the only remedy was the Nazarite one—“Touch not, taste not, handle not.” The true way of this non-association with evil, is to be occupied with the Lord ; in such occupation, sin, which is still in you, lies a dead letter, and other things are in abeyance. There is nothing that deadifies more than the habit of *not minding*. A person, for example, who is seeking association with you. He calls, but you are occupied ; he calls again, and you are occupied ; he repeats his call, still you are occupied. He *knows you prefer being occupied to him, and he is*

mortified—the energy which first marked him is broken. Thus is it with the flesh ; to be spiritually minded is life and peace ; minding the things of the Spirit, being occupied with them, becomes a practical mortification—a deadifying process to the flesh. This I believe is the power of a true personal holiness—separation unto God being the greatest power in separation from evil.

Now Samson is our illustration in all these, for he, alas ! is too much the picture of what many are in these perilous times, in which saints have lost the power for resisting the inroads of evil around them. Would that Joseph, or Daniel, or better still, the blessed Nazarite Himself—the Lord—were the one to whom we could refer as being the standard, according to which they may favorably compare. We have all in Christ, as we shall see ; but, alas ! is it not that we are too like other men. Now Samson, as we have seen, was a Nazarite by birth—he did not come into it by attainment. We do not come into all we have in Christ by attainment. He had all power—a lion

or a bear was nothing to him—he could rend them as easily as he could a thread. We are born, beloved, as children of God, into all the unsearchable riches which are in Christ, into a participation of the divine nature; filled out of the fulness that is in God. One with Christ, all that He has, communicable, is ours. “All things are ours.” Oh, how vast! how blessed! who knows the height, or depth, or length, or breadth of that love of God, which in association with His Son has put us into this. No effort of ours could ever have attained it; we have it, beloved, by birth—we are born into it, born to know it; that as Adam could, as it were, instinctively tell all the names of lamb, or lion, or dove in the garden, at his will; so we, with the open eye given us of God, through such truth as Ephesians or Colossians, are able to “comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.” If we have not this power, we have no defence. If we lose the consciousness *of it*, we may well infer that the Nazarite vow has

been marred or broken. It is one thing to be in the right of a Nazarite; but it is another thing to be in its maintenance or realization, and all the time that we are out of that, or in other words, all the time that a Christian is not realizing communion with God, is counted as lost time. Ah! beloved, tried by this balance, how little is that life whose existence is enjoyed in such communion. *Communion is that which is common to God and to us*, as the word shows, indicating the *joint proprietorship*, as it were, *between the blessed God and His children*. Such proprietorship is always ours. We have been born to it. The blessed One who has redeemed us, and who is in the bosom of the Father, is *His* Son—His well-beloved Son, and *our* well-beloved Saviour. To be in the enjoyment of this common possession, there should be something in us corresponding in our knowledge of Christ, to that which God Himself has respecting Him. Else how appreciate Him, or how love Him, or how fetch the secret joy—the true Nazarite joys from out of Him? Or how have realized communion with God re-

specting Him? I say *realized* communion; for if communion be what we have said, viz. joint proprietorship, as the word indicates, we can never lose our communion any more than union; but what we can lose is the *realization*, the *enjoyment*, the true sense of the blessedness of it. We ought ever to be in the maintenance of the portion we have along with God in His well-beloved Son. Of course, in like manner, God is ours; and we have communion with the Son respecting Him; but if we are not in some measure in the same intelligence with the blessed Son, how can we know God, or how know the Father? How delight in Him? How go from strength to strength, from joy to joy, from one degree of rest to another in our possession of Him? And how especially, can we enjoy communion with the Son Himself respecting God? The same, with everything else which is ours; for "all things are ours, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Instead of this realized communion being the exception, it should be the rule, it should be that which should form our

entire life; for Nazariteship had no limitation as to time. In this respect, the Nazarite was unlike the Levite; the Levite was not permitted to serve before thirty, nor to remain in service beyond fifty. He might have had vigour before the one age, but not experience; he surely had experience after the other, but not, perhaps, his full vigour. God would have the very bloom of his existence for His service—the bloom of all that he had, bodily strength, the mind, the affections. But we, beloved, are under no such limits—either as Levites or Nazarites. The moment we are born again we are in the service of the true sanctuary, “inside the veil,” and in the blessed right of a long unending communion. The end of natural life here is but the beginning of days which never have a close. We shall depart to be with Christ. Paradise or glory is the immediate goal of every child of God; and our normal condition in the energy of enjoyed communion is, that “though the outward man perish, the inward man is renewed day by day.” Oh, blessed, beloved, is

this realized communion ! sweet its very brokenness of spirit ! its emptiness of self ! so that God fills with His fulness, the overflow of which is our adoration, and our praise, and our worship in the very scene of the holiness and righteousness and truth of God.

But whence now the interruptions to all this ?

In Samson's case he had gone down to the valley of Sorek, the meaning of which, singularly, connects it with wine. Suggestively, what had a Nazarite in such a place ? And he sees an object there who secures his affections. He does not ask divinedirection. What the Lord thinks of it is no thought to him. Alas ! such is it often with the Christian ; being in the world he becomes of it, and unconsciously to himself is ensnared in its temptatious folds. The Philistines marvelled at his strength ; but were ignorant of the hidden source. "Entice him," they said, "and see wherein his great strength lieth ;" and once in the arms of temptation see how worried and wearied even a Nazarite is. "*Tell me, I pray thee,*" she said,—behold.

her seductiveness,—“how canst thou say, I love thee when thy heart is not with me? Thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein they great strength lieth.” And mark the result: “And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him so that his soul was vexed unto death,”—“shortened,” the word is, “unto death,” fruit of the ways of the Delilah world,—“that he told her all his heart.” And what was the secret of his strength? Why, his Nazariteship, of course; in our case, realized communion. His strength went from him when he disclosed his secret. He said, “I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him.” Ah, beloved, beloved, do you understand anything of this? Once yield up the secret, or once yield to the seductions of evil, and your secret is gone—that is, your enjoyed communion with God is gone. You may say, I will go out as at other times; but your strength is lost, the Lord has departed from you.

And said we not, how wretched the name of a Nazarite, whilst the power is departed. They mocked him; they bound him in fetters; they made him to grind in a prison-house; they put out his eyes (literally "bored"); they called for him, that they might make sport. "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness."

Ah! what a Samson in its strength had the church been, had it maintained from the first day till now its Nazarite secret! Truly the mighty are fallen, and are become as other men. But oh, what a God we have to deal with! The hair of our Nazarite began again to grow. There was life never to be lost, and in the reviving of that life God is avenged on his enemies, and more is done to testify to the glory of God in his death, than in his life.

But, as we have said, Samson never wholly recovered. It was true that he could break the pillars as aforetime, he could rend the lion and the bear, and *the whole fabric* of evil bowed to its destruction,

and God triumphed ; but Samson himself never regained his sight. There must always be a loss entailed by every downfall of a Christian. His sin is ever before him ; and his humiliation, before the Lord at least, and not unfrequently before man. But let none be discouraged. Where sin abounded, grace much more abounded. A special provision was made for restoring a Nazarite. There was the sin-offering (Num. vi. 2), and there was the burnt-offering, and there was the trespass-offering, and there was the meat-offering : all these were at hand for putting away sin, and for restoration to the enjoyment of his Nazarite position. All these he needed ; and all these he could have at any moment for his restoration. Yes, at any moment. How blessed, after all the darkness of the past. O beloved, what a loving God is ours ! How there is no lack to them that fear Him ! Oh what matchless grace ! and how needed by us—sweet is its power against sin and the devil. Well did the Lord say, “ My grace is *sufficient for thee*.” I love those words of another—of one now with

the Lord—where he says, “God’s grace in restoring gets the greatest victory over the enemy. When the conscience is soiled, and carries with it the remembrance of sin, then to be able to cast oneself still on the unfailing love of God ; this is victory of the highest order. It shone in Peter, when, in spite of his recent denial, he could cast himself into the sea to reach the Lord *alone*. And in Psalm xxiii., as one observed, the soul is *restored before it walks again in righteousness*. The value of that is this, that *there is a natural tendency in the heart to reach restoration through a renewed walk in righteousness*. But this shows that the divine way rather is, to walk in righteousness through conscious restoration, by simple faith in God. This is comforting ; and if you consider for a moment, restoration will, in one way, appear more glorious than redemption ; for *restoration is the grace that meets the sin of the soul in having slighted redemption*. And indeed such grace is blessed.” Yea, blessed indeed ! Confessing our sins, their power *is broken*, the evil is dissipated, and enjoyed com

munion is again restored. And blessed is it through His truth to know how this is done. As we have the righteousness of God, in which we stand as believing sinners ; so, as His saved people, we have the righteous *One*, who appears for us as our Advocate. Do any of you, beloved, want now to renew your maintenance of enjoyed communion ? He is there—that righteous One—for you ; one look, one confiding sense of the value of His precious blood, and all is peace again, all is rest. Such are the ways of His love—such ways as He taught to Moses—ways of His grace—unchanging grace ! unchanging love ! taught to us by His own precious Spirit.

“ O Lord ! Thy love’s unbounded,
 So sweet, so full, so free—
 My soul is all transported,
 Whene’er I think on THEE.

Yet, Lord, alas ! what weakness
 Within myself I find !
 No infant’s changing pleasure
 Is like my wand’ring mind.

And yet Thy love's unchanging,
And doth recall my heart,
To joy in all its brightness,
The peace its beams impart.

Yet, sure if in Thy presence
My soul still constant were,
Mine eye would more familiar
Its brightest glories bear.

And thus Thy deep perfections
Much better should I know,
And with adoring fervour
In this Thy likeness grow,

How sweet 'tis to discover,
If clouds have dimm'd my sight,
When pass'd, Eternal Lover!
Toward me as e'er Thou'rt bright.

Oh! keep my soul, then, Jesus,
Abiding still with Thee;
And if I wander, teach me
Soon back to Thee to flee,

That all Thy gracious favour
May to my soul be known;
And versed in this Thy goodness,
My hopes Thyself shall crown."

THE ALTAR AND THE TABLE.

LEVITICUS iii. 7.

QNLY especially favoured ones could enjoy certain things under Moses ; there were differences of enjoyment, degrees of nearness and access to God ; none of the priests could go into the Holiest—none of the people into the Sanctuary. “But *all* things are ours,” as contrasted with the things under the law. So that whatever there is of preciousness in the subject before us, which pertained to the offerer under Aaron, or to Aaron himself, is blessedly ours. Aaron, as we know, could go into the holiest but once a year, and these feasts, about which we are now to speak, could only be by perpetual offerings ; but by Christ our one offering we are for ever made nigh, and can feast in the very innermost scene of the

Divine Presence. What a subject opens up to us here ; and how one thanks God, beloved, for this Book of Leviticus, this book of our soul's access to Him. It is here, more than anywhere else, we see Christ displayed to us in all the wondrous details of His life and death, His Person and work ; also ourselves, as believers, in all our enjoyment of Him, and of God through Him. Such enjoyment, as in a mirror, is presented to us here.

The peace-offering is that which sets forth the fellowship of God's children, according to the value of the sacrifice ; it includes fellowship with God, with Christ, and with one another ; for the offerer could invite others with him to the enjoyment of the feast which was spread upon the table. There was first an altar, on which the offering was put, and then after that, a table on which the offerer and his friends could eat.

I shall first of all draw your attention to *the Altar* itself ; next, to *the Table* ; and thirdly, to the connexion existing between the two.

First, the ALTAR as seen in Lev. iii. 3 to the end.

It is an offering made by fire unto the Lord. "The fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them. . . Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt-sacrifice; it is an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the Lord."

The animal whence the fat was taken was to be perfectly clean, without spot or blemish; the fat itself we believe denoted the intrinsic perfectness of the inner being of the blessed Lord. Beloved, I go to this altar, and I see the inner being of the perfect One represented, all laid open before the Lord; the law was written in His heart: "I delight to do Thy will, O God." He was equally perfect, both as man and as God; and it is at the altar that, instead of my depravity, I see Him—Christ, who is accepted for me by God, set over against all my sinfulness, and I have there in Him that which is "a sweet savour unto God."

But the victim, ere it was presented as a sweet savour offering, was to be perfectly clean; if

needful, it was washed and rinsed, and rinsed and washed, until not a single particle of what was foreign to it remained upon it. All this denoted, as to the Lord, His own intrinsic perfectness. Well may we say, each one of us, "Not me, but Christ!" For could such an offering be a fit representation of me? that is, in myself, born in sin, shapen in iniquity, with sin still remaining in me; for in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. Is it not of the heart by nature that the Lord speaks, when He says: "Out of the heart (yours and mine) proceed murders, thefts,"—a black, unutterable fount of evil? We have truly, on being born again, another heart—seat of a new spring of existence, and of new affections; but the old fount still remains. We are not now, as formerly, in the flesh; but the flesh is in us. Said the bride, speaking of herself, "I am black," but of herself in Christ, "I am comely."

It is all Christ, beloved, which we have here, and Christ for us before God. We have only *to stand still and see* the provision made for our

need by God. The offerer had nothing to do with himself, as to adding anything to the value of the offering; it was not a matter of his own attainment, his own feeling, his own mortification, his own sufferings, or his own merits. No, he had only to touch, to put his hand upon the offering, and the whole value of it was at once imputed by God to him, yea, all its preciousness and all its perfectness; the *satisfaction*, as well as the salvation, was all his in Christ. Do you understand, beloved? for how blessed is all this to those who do understand. For here we have a perfect sanctification in Christ Jesus, which, when the soul realizes and enjoys, gives daily power for that personal sanctification, (separatedness from sin,) after which so many fruitlessly strive—hoping to attain, by their own sufferings, or their own mortifyings, that which can only be attained by the right apprehension of and living in the consciousness and power of, the value of that one offering, which, in all its essential perfectness, was laid once and for ever on the altar of God for us.

Again, I say, how precious is all this to the soul that knows it ! Oh, dear believers, fill your eyes with a sight of Him thus, the Christ of God, who is our only true peace. Let the heart rest in Him, and enjoy all that God in His love and grace has provided in Him. The heart can never rest in itself, not even the renewed heart ; but how different when joined to Christ. “ If ever I make of Christ and myself two,” said Luther, “ I am gone.” It is the spirit of antichrist to separate from Christ. And if ever we look for any blessing *in ourselves*, we fail of having it. Looking at all Christ is, we have all in Him. Oh, again I say, fill your eyes with a sight of Him, in whom ye *are washed, ye are justified, ye are sanctified.*

You must remember that it was *all* the fat which was laid down upon the altar ; there was *nothing* kept back ; so that when the Lord could say : “ I may tell all my bones, they look and stare upon me,” the whole of His perfectness gave value to that death which was presented to God for us, yea, *which value God imputes to us, and which is ours ;*

there was no more conscience of sin. As to the state of his soul, the offerer was privileged to the full enjoyment of the value of that on which he feasted, and of that into which he had already been brought, viz : peace with God. It was as if he had said, "God wants me to be happy ; being saved, let me enjoy the salvation ; being justified, let me enjoy my condition. Peace has been made with God ; let me now indulge in that peace ; yea, let me feed on God's offering of peace." Oh ! wondrous peace ! for the peace we have is peace *with* God ; nay more, it is the peace *of* God ; nay, the very *God of peace* Himself, which is more than peace. Peace truly is one thing, a blessed thing ; but God Himself is much more ; it is not only His peace, but Himself, which we have.

Beloved, let us never be content without this realized enjoyment of Christ. Let our ever-growing delight be in the thought, that in Christ Jesus our Lord we all have our one offering, one atonement, one mediator, one Christ, bringing us who were poor, lost, miserable sinners, first of

all to Himself, and through Himself, into *God*. Oh, who that sees this could desire greater blessedness! Oh, infinite, eternal, ineffable portion—in Christ, in God! and feasting where God feasts—*on Christ*.

But now mark, thirdly, the connexion which existed between the Altar and the Table. The offerer could only feast on first and second days removed from the altar, (see Lev. vii. 16.) If he wanted to feast on the third day, he should offer another victim. The feast of the Table was not to go on after the remembrance or the energy of the Altar had spent itself. Beginning in the Spirit, he was not to end in the flesh. Alas this, in our very praises, our worship, and in our service, we often do. We are never to lose sight of *the death* of Christ; we are never to be independent of the cross; all our enjoyments are to have perpetual connexion with the death by which they were procured: thus in heaven, that which satisfied God at the cross will be held in eternal

remembrance. It is there we shall ever sing, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood"—linking the cost at which we were redeemed for ever in with the joy of our being thereby made "kings and priests unto our God, to whom be glory for ever and ever." So that the "*two days*," in which the energy of the altar was sustained, will run on and continue with us throughout an endless eternity. What will heaven be but the long and deep indulgence of what we now desire? As we sing,—

"Fain would I, Jesus, know Thy love,
Which yet no measure knows—
Would search the depth of all Thy wounds,
The secret of Thy wces.
Fain would I strike the golden harp,
And wear the promised crown ;
And at Thy feet, while bending low,
Would sing what grace has done."

The eye and the hand blessedly connected ; as the eyesee, the hand will be instinctively upon the lyre—each sight of that once pierced side, that once

marred brow, will be a fresh incentive to a new outburst of song.

You understand, this is the long and lasting connexion between the death of Christ and our eternal blessedness—between the hole of the pit, whence we have been digged, and the height of the glory to which we are brought. There is a similarly blessed connexion shown us between the cross and the throne, as in Heb. v. 7, 8, where it is said, “Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered, and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him.” It was by the cross on which He suffered that He obtained for us eternal redemption, and having satisfied God thereon, He is called to the throne, as in the verse which follows: “*Called,*” or as we are reminded the word is, *greeted!* wel-

comed ! “ by God to His throne, a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.”

Yes, the scene of His priesthood is there, at the throne in heaven, where He is gone in for us, and where He is *greeted*—welcomed ; and where we also, because of the value of His sufferings, are greeted and welcomed in Him.

“ Oh this is life, oh this is joy,
My God, to find Thee so.”

We can never dissociate *our* heaven from *His* sufferings. And, oh, *those* sufferings ! Ah, dear friends, they *were* sufferings ; all others are but a name ; *they* were a deep reality ; who but Himself will ever know them ? and who but Himself could tell them ? “ My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? ” It was *God* forsaking Him (God as Judge) which caused such unutterable anguish. Not the Father, as many suppose, forsaking the Son ; no, as Son He never lost communion with the Father, not even at the cross. As Son—at the immediate approach to it in Gethsemane—He

could say, being in most blessed communion, “*Father*, if it be possible;” and on the cross, “*Father*, forgive them;” and again, “*Father*, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.” It was God, as Judge, righteously dealing with sin, (pouring out its full judgment,) who forsook Christ on the tree.

This we say was unutterable anguish,—not of body, though that was great, but of soul. It was His soul that was charged with sin. The most solemn, awful, and mysterious word perhaps in the whole Scripture, is that where it is said, “When Thou shalt make His *soul an offering for sin*.” It was His *soul* that was troubled—“Now is my soul troubled.” It is this, beloved, we are never to forget. His death saved us; but saving us was not the chief thing. By His death Christ manifested and glorified God; it was this that was so precious to God, because of the value (through death) of Christ to Him; as He says, “Therefore doth my Father love Me, because I lay down my life.”

Ah, dear friends, it is knowing thus God's estimate of His death, that we have such happiness, such rest, such joy in feeding on Christ, feeding as did the offerer at the table, feeding on that which hath already been enjoyed by God Himself, and which now He hath provided for us. And we are each to receive it just as Abraham did, when Melchisedec came out, after victory, to bless him, giving him bread and wine; he had only to *receive*; so we are simple recipients, gratefully, adoringly taking at the hand of God what He has provided for us through our own divine Melchisedec.

And now with what thoughtfulness and intelligence of soul should we look at the *one* only condition which God has assigned to this realized enjoyment with Him; for it is conditional. *Salvation* is unconditional; well for us it is so, else how could we be saved? But it is not so with our realized fellowship—communion.

We read, the defiled or unclean person could

not eat. An unclean person may be an Israelite ; but he could not enjoy this offering with defilement on him ; he could not enjoy fellowship with God ; if he would enjoy fellowship with God, he must resort to other provisions first ; for his *sins* there was the sin-offering ; for his *trespasses* the trespass-offering. He may release his soul from its burdens as to these, and then, with no conscience of sin, this feast may be enjoyed. Thus we who are the children of God *are clean* as to atonement—salvation ; but if our soul be defiled by evil unconfessed, if our feet are soiled in our walk, and not washed, we have no happy communion with God ; we have no joy in His presence ; at His Table all is rest, all is perfectness, and in the power of death and resurrection, we must be meet for the scene ; that meetness is Christ, as we have seen. The cross *has* dealt with all our sins. In resurrection, we see sin, sins, self all left behind, and our souls in fellowship with God, according to the value of that before God which has put

them all away. But it is by the Spirit we are to live in the power of this. To be "*filled* with the Spirit" is the true way of being emptied of sin, and emptied of the world.

"Filled! yea, filled to overflowing;
 Gracious Spirit; what so precious to my soul
 As Thy sweet presence! what so effectual
 To exclude all else—the strivings
 Of this 'present evil world,' 'the flesh,' 'the devil,'
 All so ready to intrude upon the heart
 Which Thou alone shouldst fill;
 Oh, fill, fill, fill my soul,
 Leaving no room for aught beside."

And yet it is remarkable, that along with this being filled with the Spirit, this enjoyment of Christ, as in the peace-offering (chap. viii. 13), it was appointed that *leavened* cakes should be offered; now leaven is the type of *evil*, it is the type of our sin; and yet, as we have seen in the same chapter, verse 19, only those who were "*undefiled*"—*clean*, could be owned of God as offerers. There seems to be a contradiction; but there really is none; for the leaven here is not allowed sin—it is not sin

having dominion, but sin in the flesh—the sin which is still *in* us ; but which, while the soul is abiding in Christ, lies in abeyance ; though not dead in itself, we are dead to it ; such is the scope of Rom. vi. ; as to its *presence*, sin is still in us, we are never without it ; in such sense we may say, each of us, “ My sin is ever before me.” Unless, then, we may enjoy the peace-offering as *sinner*s, we can never enjoy it at all. It is well, beloved, to know this, and to own it before God, that we *are* poor sinners, and in ourselves *still vile* and corrupt ; unless we are aware that we are such, as saved ones, we could never know peace in our souls, or have rest before God. But then, though sin is still in us, it is *not to be allowed*. We are not to sin that grace may abound. It is our nature, as born of God, it is the nature of the *new man*, not to sin ; and we who are born of God are to be dead to it. Sin is not to have dominion over us ; hence we are to be clean, “ undefiled.” Should we sin, should we be defiled, because living in

some allowed evil, we cease to enjoy our communion with God. Our fellowship is interrupted, and our place for the time is not at the Table, feasting on Christ ; but with the other provisions mercifully arranged by God for us ; we require to have renewed in our souls the continued value of the trespass-offering, and must seek anew the power in our souls of the sin-offering. Confession is ours ; for “ if we *confess* our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness ; ” thus our communion becomes renewed ; the Spirit no longer grieved, again enables us to worship and enjoy God according to the value of the perfectness and preciousness of Christ.

And that perfectness and preciousness, like the love of His heart, are unchangeable. Hence it is the Solomon’s song truth, which is so precious to one who has failed. Said a beloved saint to me not long since, “ I am never low or unhappy in my soul, that that song has not a power to re-

store me." So is it; the Bride may be disturbed in her soul—disconsolate—hurrying after watchmen—writing bitter things against herself; but He is just the same. Her verdict of herself is a gloomy one; but His thoughts of her, how gracious! how reassuring! how restoring!

"My love."

"My dove."

"My fair one."

"My undefiled."

Such love have all His saints.

PRECIOUS Saviour! Thou hast linked us
 In Thy deep, unchanging love;
 There in spirit Thou wilt keep us,
 Happy in Thyself above.
 There remaining, and confiding,
 Love unbounded Thou dost prove.

Blessed is each sweet endeavour
 Of our souls Thy grace to own;
 Blessed, too, the Father's favour,—
 Love of Father to the *Son*,
 Ever flowing, flowing to us,
 Through Thyself, His perfect One.

Sweet it is, with sins forgiven,
 Yea, with bitter conflicts o'er,
 Still to find in Thee our heaven,
 Still to find Thy love the more;
 Grace abounding, never ending,
 Is in Thee a plenteous store.

Blessed Lord! what times of sorrow
 Do our failings oft ensure,
 As to-day, the same to-morrow,
 Till the dark'ning cloud is o'er,
 But Thy pity, wondrous pity,
Meets us in the contrite hour.

O! to keep for ever near Thee,
 Go no more from where Thou art;
 Know Thee, trust Thee, never grieve Thee,
 Love Thee with adoring heart.
 Sweet communion! still enjoying,
 Freed from sin's condemning smart.

Thus should aught again oppress us,
 Lead from Thee, as oft wer'e led,
 From Thy love which doth so bless us,
 While some wayward path we tread,
 Thou wilt keep us, gently lead us,
 Feed us as Thy flock are fed.

Endless pleasures soon await us,
 Tears no more shall dim our eyes,
 Thou Thyself wilt come and take us,
 To our home beyond the skies;
 Full redemption! in a moment!
 Ours eternal, as we rise.

Blessed goal! with rapture gaining,
 All we e'er desired before,
 In the rest of God remaining,
 Ne'er to sin or grieve Thee more;
 But for ever, and together,
Scan Thy love unchanging o'er.

ROMANS VII.

THE first verse gives the key to the chapter :
“ Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them
that know the law,) how that the law hath
dominion over a man as long as he liveth ? ” Only
“ *as long as he liveth.* ” Death *having transpired*, the
dominion of the law ceases. The murderer, as long
as he still lives, may well dread the law, or be
brought to death by the law ; but the moment death
transpires, the law can do no more. The scaffold
on which its victim expired, is the end of all the law
could demand.

Beloved, it is well for us that it is only “ *as long
as he liveth.* ” For *we*, our natural sinful selves, are
not now alive. Morally we are ; but not judicially.
As God sees us, and as the law sees us, we are dead.
We have died in the Person of Christ. Blessed, pre-

eious testimony of the Spirit of God is this fourth verse : " Wherefore, ye also are become dead to the law *by the body of Christ.*" But where have we become dead ? On the cross. Why ? Because of the law—the law had said, " The soul that sinneth it shall die." But did Christ sin ? Nay ! but we have sinned, and the gospel is, that God exacted the penalty from Him, and He became answerable !

Paul, in this chapter, is not, I believe, describing his own experience ; excepting so far as he knew that *he* had died in Christ, and that therefore he was no longer under the dominion of the law. Ah ! no ; is he not stating a great principle respecting what law exercises are in one who, as yet, does not know grace ? Did anyone know grace more than he, the apostle to whom " the mystery " was revealed ? Was it *his* experience to say, " I am carnal, sold under sin ? " or, " I am a wretched man ; who shall deliver me ? " or, " I am unable to do good, for when I would do it, evil is present with me." Did he not say of fellow-believers, " I speak not unto you as *unto carnal* " ? and did he not say, " I can do all

things through Christ" ? and instead of the " Who shall deliver me ? " did he not affirm : " I *know* whom I have believed " ?

No, the chapter is a remarkable description of life without liberty ; of the knowledge of the law, and of sin, by which the law brings to death, without the knowledge of how the law has brought to death in the Person of Christ, and how, therefore, there is now no more death. It is the full description of an awakened conscience, sitting down, not in the sunshine of divine love, but before the law, and in fear of the doom to which the law brings. It is Sinai, and not Calvary. It is the flesh, with the law flashing its terrors on it ; and *not* the Spirit telling of Christ, who is the end of the law to every one that believeth.

Beloved ! it is a blessed thing, the knowledge of the *grace* of God. The contrast here is between one who, in this chapter, is miserable in his helplessness under law, and of one who, in the end of the same chapter and the beginning of the next, is no longer under law, but under grace. In the one, it is all

“*I*,” looking in on self—a poor, miserable thing to do. In the other, it is all *Christ*—beholding the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world, a blessed, liberating, soul-supporting, joy-inspiring spectacle !

Alive, but not happy, is I believe the great truth brought out in the words which I have read—those extending from verses 14 to 25. They never could, as some imagine, express the natural condition of a Christian. Is it natural to the Christian to have *no* power for good ? to declare he is *carnal, sold under sin* ? to say he does not know *who* can deliver him ? to declare he is *only wretched*, and that without remedy ?

I know some, and they well-taught Christians even, who strangely teach that the 7th of Romans is the very perfection of Christian experience. That it may be the experience of a Christian is true ; but it is one thing for a Christian to have *an experience*, and quite another, for that experience to be *Christian* experience. What ! Is it natural to a *believer* to have a life of *unbelieving* ? And yet many Chris-

tians, all their life long, live in doubt. No; the normal state of a child of God is, that *he believes*; and that *believing*, he has joy—joy unspeakable and full of glory.

That this experience of the 7th of Romans cannot be the normal experience of a child of God, is seen from the following reasons: First,—it is not natural to a Christian to be wretched or ignorant, as here: “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?” *Forty* times in this chapter, the person speaking refers to “*I*,” “*me*,” or “*my*.” And, Secondly, there is not one word of the Lord Jesus Christ, or of the Holy Ghost; not a word about the love or grace of God. Thirdly—the whole statement is destitute of a single modicum of peace, or joy, or assurance, or power for sanctification, or liberty; and consequently, not a particle of happiness, excepting in that one expression: “I delight in the law of God after the inward man.” But quite possible is it to delight in the law, and not be happy.

There is an inward man—a new nature, that could

knowledge of self, and sin, and law, and all these bringing to death : but no Christ. He sees danger, yea, doom ; but no escape. He is alive, but miserable. When he saw not the danger, he was at ease ; he was, in the sense of being self-satisfied, alive once without the law ; thought he was all right ; like a man who had slept in a dark cell ; all the while it was dark and he slept, it was easy enough ; vipers were there, but he knew it not ; but now two things have happened ; first, he himself is awake, and next, the light has come in. He sees with dismay the reptiles, for they are all around ; in vain he looks for some door of escape, but he sees no door of escape for him ; there is no way of egress for them. Truly he is alive in his misery ; but there is no help, no power to deliver. Could he see a door, what a relief ! Is it any wonder he cries out, "*O wretched man that I am ?*"

You understand, dear friends ; alive to the law we may be ; alive to sin and to its doom, which is death. *And as to ourselves, the hell of the natural heart—the enmity, the depravity, the wickedness, instead of*

holiness of our nature, all these may be seen by the awakened soul; but relief may not be seen, the gospel-grace may not be seen. Ah, no! were Christ seen, the true Door would be seen; life, liberty, peace, would be seen. How dreadful to see the law only, with no escape from its terrors! or sin only, with no escape from its doom! or self only, with no help from its wretchedness! Like the form of punishment known to the Romans, which was that the living victim should be bound to a corpse, with mouth to mouth, to breathe at every breath the stench of death. Such may well exclaim, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Wretched indeed must it be; but more wretched that of which we speak—life, but no liberty; light revealing sin, hateful sin, and self, miserable, corrupt self, all in contrast with the beauty of the Divine One, the holiness and perfectness of God Himself.

Dear friends, is it the normal state of a Christian *not to know deliverance*? Mark the low state of intelligence which is here disclosed. It is, "Who

shall deliver me?" As much as to say, "Is there *one* who can deliver?" or, "Is there *no one* to deliver?" Is it normal to the child of God that he should be quickened and made alive to all the evils that are within and around! to see sin, and death, and hell; *but no deliverer?* Ah, if I only saw the law, saw God in all His ineffable holiness and excellence, and did not see Christ, I should be forced to cry out, "O wretched man that I am." Only let a murderer see *the law* which has him in its grasp, and which can only hang him, and he can be only miserable. The law has no deliverance. Sin in itself, the flesh in itself, the law of God in itself, contain no deliverance. No, like a mirror held up to my deformity, the law can only reveal it, only make it manifest. We had never known sin but by the law; we had never known ourselves but by knowing God. It was seeing *Him* that led the prophet to say, "Woe is me;" and Job also, "Now mine eye seeth Thee, I abhor myself."

What, then, is it which delivers? Deliverance is by death. Were the murderer to die, the law has

no more claim upon him, unless indeed it were to bury him; it is only as long as he liveth that the law hath dominion over him. Death is the end of all claims. Imagine a debtor; he has fled from his creditors, who find him in a foreign land, and if they find him alive, the law asserts its dominion over him; but if they find him dead, there is an end of their pursuit, they have no claim on the dead. But am I dead? am I *personally dead*? No, ah no, beloved; it is in *Christ* that I am dead. What a deliverance! All pursued me, to bring me to death—the law, sin, the Judge who had declared, “The soul that sins must die”—they all demanded death. Oh wonderful love of God! He it was who found the death, not mine, but Christ’s. *He died*, the law accepted Him as substitute; the Judge accepted Him; He in love, has taken the place of the sinner, He died. The Judge said *death*; the law said *death*; the death having transpired, there is now no more death, no more doom; the sentence has been executed, no more to be repeated.

I know not if you ever heard of a singular circum-

stance which long years ago really occurred. An executed felon having hung the appointed time on the gallows, was taken down, and given to the surgeons for dissection. Imagine their astonishment when he was found to be still alive ! The question arose as to whether he must undergo the sentence again ; but it was decided that the law had had its course, it could go no further. Oh ! it is at the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ (let it be written on your hearts) that we see in *His* death the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. The law took Him there, slew Him on the tree, claimed His body for death. We point to His death and to His grave—for He was buried also—and say, “ We have been crucified with Christ,” yea, buried together with Him by baptism into His death.

Ah ! it is thus the door is open. We are no longer as in a dungeon, asking for release ; no longer saying, “ Who shall deliver me, or from what point may I look for deliverance ? ” We know the Deliverer, we know the deliverance. Oh ! with what a *different mind* to that of the “ O wretched man,”

are we now able to exclaim, "*I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" In the one case, we could only be wretched ; in the other we ought only to be happy. What a denial of the gospel to deny this !

Dear friends, though the seventh of Romans is not the perfection of Christian experience, it is *the way to it*. A deep sense of sin, of the killing power of the law, of the misery of self, those were all grand preparations for the full, sweet enjoyment of the life, light, liberty, brought by the love God, who gave His Son, who died for us. Seeing Him, it is no more "I ;" but "thank *God* through Jesus Christ our Lord." How does the darkness of Romans vii. dissolve amid the light of Romans viii. !

ROMANS VIII.

IN Romans viii. we get liberty, and holiness, and resurrection, and glory. Instead of the condemnation of chapter vii., we have full blessed liberty, we have *no condemnation* : as is said, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," or, as it might be rendered, "Now, therefore, *nothing is a condemnation*;" and why? Because, first, that which was condemnable in God's thought, sin and the nature in which sin is, have been, like the rags of the prodigal, once and for ever put away; so that God can say, "*Your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more.*" There is nothing now before God which could receive a condemnation. It has been all brought to an end at the cross of Christ.

Again: *the condemnation itself* has had its way. *The condemnation* fell on Him; and now the be-

lieving sinner stands where not one bolt of divine vengeance can reach him, where not one droplet of divine wrath can be poured out on him. He is where the wrath is overpast. Like Noah's dove from the ark, it strayed away over where the water had been, and found a resting place where *no more wrath or judgment could touch it*. The wave of death, the billows of wrath, have all subsided *in Christ*.

But some may say, "Then is there no more trouble for the Christian?" I did not say so. He may be troubled. There may be tribulation. There may be temptation; but no condemnation. He may groan; not because of condemnation, not because of his bondage to the law; but because, seeing its holiness and purity, he longs to be like Him who was perfectly the expression of that law. And then the groaning is not from ignorance, but rather from knowledge, because so much light has been brought in, that he sees not only the deliverance, but the Deliverer Himself, even Jesus. And he groans for complete conformity to Him who has so graciously and gloriously delivered him.

Ah, yes! a christian may have groaning enough. You remember Jesus at the grave of Lazarus. Why did *He* groan? If you were about to raise one from the dead, would you not rather sing than groan? Why, then, did He groan? Was it from any bondage He was in? Ah, no! it was the sorrow which He saw around Him, and the terrible havoc and devastation which sin had made. Besides, the Lord was perfect man. Would any one with perfect human sympathies not have sorrowed? It was only when He came and saw, that He wept. Have you never gone where there has been bereavement? Have you never seen the bereaved bending over the corpse of their loved dead? And have you not wept?

And then, "We that are in this tabernacle do groan." (2 Cor. v.) Surely this is nothing less than sorrow; but sorrow for what? Why, sorrow to be in the full blessedness of resurrection—to be clothed upon with the house which is from heaven. Who but a Christian has this sorrow? Take the man *of the world*; if only he has life, if only he has *riches*, if only he has position and influence, he can

be well contented in this life ; he would be well satisfied to go on thus through the long years of an immortality here. But how different with the children of God. *We* are exiles ; we are far from our home ; we are treading a stranger soil—are breathing an uncongenial atmosphere. *Therefore* we groan—*therefore* we long for emancipation into the glory for which we were created. We want heaven—that for which we were born ; we want *Him* of whom Paul said : “ I know whom I have believed.” We want deliverance from the burden of the flesh ; we want to be freed from that law of sin which is in our members, and which is still warring against the law of our mind. Ah ! then,—God give us to understand that which makes us sorrow is not ignorance of the place to which by grace we have been brought ; but the absence of and longing for the full, infinite portion we have in Christ.

And this brings me to our second thought in this chapter, which is *holiness*. For after liberty, comes practical personal holiness, or righteousness. We are holy, righteous in Christ. And what we want is

to be holy, righteous, in our walk and life. Says the apostle : " For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh." What could not the law do ? The law could not make you holy. Why ? Because the flesh had mastery, and was—*is* essentially unholy. And the law could not make us love God, because the flesh is essential enmity. " What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh ; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us," (not by law-keeping, for that were impossible ; but in us), " who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." When I see Christ dying for me, a poor, lost, hell-deserving sinner, my love to Him is drawn out, and I love Him who first loved me and gave Himself for me. Did the *law* give me that love ? No ; but it demands that I should love ; and thus, in loving Him who first loved me, I fulfil the law ; not by trying to keep it, but by seeing Him and knowing Him as the One who *has saved me*. Again,—the law demands holiness.

And now that I love Him, He asks me for obedience as a proof of that love ; and this obedience to *Him* demands death to all that to which *He* died. I am to see to it, that I “ mortify the members which are upon the earth,” and that, as in Romans vi., *I am dead* to the sin for which He died.

Oh ! happy moments, when we thus realize holiness of life—liberty, viz., in Christ—a walk in the Spirit—“ no condemnation ”—dead to sin, and the mortification of the flesh. Not that the flesh is actually dead ; it is not ; it is only kept in abeyance ; the deadly principle is still within, ready to spring up with new energy at any moment, on any occasion. But *occupied with Jesus, we are not occupied with sin*. Like Mary at the sepulchre, she was so absorbed with Jesus, her mind so engaged with Him, that it was nowhere else ; not with angel or disciple ; she was occupied with one Person. Oh ! beloved, when our Spirit is occupied with the Lord, we are dead to all else. As Paul, caught up into the third heaven, was so occupied with Him, he could not tell whether he was in the body or out of the body. His mind

was absorbed, he knew not whether he had a body, or whether he had not a body. What a picture (as we have been reminded) of the employment of separate spirits in heaven. There, in the glory, amid the beatific light, our souls bowed before the ineffable presence of the blessed One, we may not know whether in the body, or whether not. Like the multitude yesterday, who thronged to see the princess bride, and bridegroom. They were so occupied with those who were the centre in that scene, that they never, for an instant, reflected as to what they themselves were. Such was the power of an object. So now, dear Christians, to be occupied with Jesus is the greatest mortification to the flesh. And occupied with Him, we walk in the Spirit, and *do not* fulfil the desires of the flesh. Walking in the Spirit, you are walking with God, you are walking with home in view. Like the child at school, there may be seven, fourteen, or even twenty-one days more of school; it matters not; the mind is filled with home; home-longings fill the heart. Oh! to *have a heart—to have a mind*, beloved, even now *at*

home with God. Oh ! the precious, wondrous power of Christ as a Person, in abstracting the mind from assailing and distracting associations. If we are abiding in *Him*, we are not abiding in self, we are not abiding in sin, we are not obeying two masters.

And now follows a beautiful statement about another thing. We have got liberty ; we have got personal holiness. We shall never be satisfied till we get resurrection. The apostle says here (and we get two beautiful truths in this 10th verse) : “ If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you,”—there is the one truth—the Spirit of God is dwelling in you ; and here is the second : “ He that raised up Christ from the dead *shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.*”

The Holy Ghost dwells in you as a divine occupant : “ Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost ? ” and secondly, God will never lose sight of your person—your body, until He puts you into the glory. *This* He will do, by raising you from the

dead. How near we are to this, who can tell? Ah! one time (as we were saying in another place) Israel and their Canaan home,—how near! They were so near to it for three days, that they could look right into the land. They could see its mountains dropping fatness; its valleys with milk and honey flowing; they were, so to speak, shaking hands with home; so near to it were they, that it was only for the ark to enter, and they were over! Jordan only divided them from it. They were, though still in the desert, skirting the land. So, beloved, we are, shall I say, skirting the glory; we are on its very threshold, with only the trump of God between us and our home. Meanwhile the Holy Ghost is dwelling in you. Blessed Guest! There to bring all to your remembrance—to teach—to lead!

And here, let me speak a word of comfort to any dear weak child of God who may need it. “How do I know,” you are asking, “that the Holy Ghost is in me?” I answer—By His very work you may know it. Whence those aspirations—those longings after holiness—after God—after entire con-

formity to Christ? They tell who is the occupant of the soul, working within you. Can you not say, "I thirst, but not as once I did, the vain delights of earth to share?" Your changed tastes and aversions tell you. Do you not say, "It is no pleasure to me to go into scenes which I once enjoyed?" You say, "I thirst, but not as once I did, for the world?" Ah! beloved, all this tells sweetly of Him who dwells in your soul. You cannot enter into scenes as once you did; they are altogether foreign to the new nature. Imagine the Lord meeting one of His disciples coming down the hill Calvary, after His resurrection, and putting the question: "What were you doing on the evening of the day I was crucified?" Imagine if the reply had been, "I was with the murderers; I joined their festivities, was one with them in their joys."

Beloved, do *you* long for full and perfect deliverance? Yes, you groan, being burdened. And who is it that gives it? Who makes you long to be away from this scene? Why do you long for redemption? It is the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

And believe me, this very dwelling in you is sanctifying. If royalty were coming into your house, what a change would it effect! No dust, not a soil, would be suffered there. Oh! what manner of person a saint of God ought to be, when he realizes that the Holy Ghost is in him.

Well, then, that is one truth; but there is another. The Holy Ghost is not finally to leave this dwelling. Monarchs may live for ever separated from theirs. Look at some old home; all left, all forsaken. Ah! beloved, but the Holy Ghost will *never* let *this* house go. He dwelleth with you now; and "He who raised up Jesus from the dead will also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." There is not a sleeping saint but God has in His safe custody. Sown in corruption, each one will be raised in incorruption; sown in weakness, each one will be raised in power; sown a natural body, each one will be raised a spiritual body. Beloved! thy *brother* shall rise again. We shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known. *And then, no more* the "O wretched man;" but the

full and final, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

And now, what was God's thought as to the glory? It is stated here: "For whom He did fore-know, He also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of His Son." How wondrous! Set apart for a particular purpose, just as one selects a plant, and says, "That is for my garden." Or another, a servant: "He is for my household." Ah! beloved, beloved, did you ever think of it? What was in God's infinite and ineffable purpose, when, passing by angels, He chose you and me? Said God, "I am going to bring him to *Myself*; I am going to have him for *My son*; I am going to put him on the throne of glory, and, therefore, I will have him *conformed to the image of My Son*." Oh, that is glorious! That is what we shall be in the glory! We shall be *like Him*. The law shews me what I am in myself, and what God demands of me, and what I cannot give. Grace shewed me what God is towards me; but glory will shew me what *grace has made me*. I shall see visibly with these

eyes then what I shall be. I shall see the *Son* to whose image I am conformed.

So Romans vii., which leads on to viii., if not perfectness, is on the way to it. You are put from bondage into liberty and righteousness, and you look on through resurrection into the glory. And now you do not groan, "O wretched man;" but you sing, "Oh, happy day!" You can say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

And now, in conclusion, let me ask, Are *you* freed from the trammels of death and fear? For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. The quickened soul receives Christ into itself when it takes the peace-giving message of the gospel; for there could be no message without a messenger; and the messenger, where God's message of mercy comes in, is the Holy Ghost; and then the soul does not say, "I am wretched," or, "I am lost;" but, "I am happy, I am saved." The warfare now is no longer between the old nature and the new simply; but between the old nature and the Holy Ghost who *directs in the new*; and when I live in the Spirit,

then I overcome ; not by what the Spirit is in Himself, but by what He does—by what He reveals. He reveals the precious blood of the Lamb, which has given me not only peace, but also victory. Beloved, let us each one anew this morning take our place in grace. How few, alas ! really know the grace of God. They mix law with grace ; but a mixture of law and grace is a deadly mixture. There is more hope of a man under law than of one who mixes up law and grace. A cup of grace saves outright, a cup of law kills outright. Mix the two, and what confusion ! Let the law bring a man to the gallows, one who had doubted he was a murderer ; his being in the power of the law soon settles the doubt ; and now, when he finds himself thus under law, oh ! how eagerly he will grasp the reprieve. *Then* he will understand what *grace* in the Sovereign is, when it can give him life. Oh ! beloved, enjoy now God's free, unlimited, unmerited grace. *By grace are ye saved.* Delight yourselves now in that which He so willingly gives.

THE LORD'S COMING.

I OFTEN feel, beloved, that even Christians think far too lightly of the Lord's coming. There is a levity of mind in the way some speak of it; yet the thought of His coming is a terrible one to everything that is of *ourselves*. The natural heart cannot endure it; it must be only a terror to all that is of self and sin within us. Ah, yes—it is only where love is *very true*, and faith is *very simple*, that it becomes a blessed, precious hope, altogether and at once, at any moment to be desired. It is, moreover, only when our souls are in *communion*, abiding in Him, that we are in personal readiness to greet Him as our Lord and Christ.

There are five ways in which the Lord's coming is spoken of in 1st Thessalonians, all so blessedly and *practically* related to *us*. I say related to *us*, for in

this Epistle it is all—"us," "*our*," *your*;" that is, it relates to *saints*. Whereas in the 2nd epistle, it is all "*them*," and relates to the world, as in chapter ii.: "That *they* all might be damned who believe not the truth." In the first epistle it is all ours, and is precious. Oh! how precious to one who knows, and loves, and longs for a personal Jesus. Each chapter of the Epistle ends with the Lord's coming, associated with some one special aspect it has towards us.

• The first chapter (verse 10) connects it with *salvation*. We *are* saved; He who comes as "Son," is "Jesus," who *hath* saved us from the coming wrath. No hell, no death, no wrath; not one droplet of that fire by which, when He comes, He will try His enemies, will befall us. Ah, no, when as "*Son*," beloved Son, He comes from heaven for us, it will be all rest, all peace, and joy, deep, unspeakable joy. Oh, to know Him more and more, and to love Him! which is a first qualification for not having fear; for perfect love casteth out all fear.

The second chapter associates the coming with

our present fellowship and the loved fruits of our labour. How like a sweet strain of love from the scene of the glory, that question—"What is our crown of rejoicing (glorying), are not ye?" That day, beloved, will show there will be no result, no crown of rejoicing, but in what He Himself gave. No mere *name* as a preacher, no popularity, no eloquent gift, will be seen to be of any account in that day; only those who are the true "ye," given as saved ones to the lifting up of the gospel of God (gospel of the glory) will be of value then. Think of Paul and his crown; think of the "ye," how they heard, and doubtless loved to remember, this word in their letter. It was not mere form, this; but a word for the heart, a word of fellowship and love. Beloved, "What is our hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing; are not even *ye* in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?"

In this third chapter (see verses 12, 13) it is not simply salvation from wrath, or mutual recognition, or fellowship of joy in the glory; but present *establishment in love* one towards another, and "unblame-

able in holiness ;" love to Him who hath begotten, and to all those who are begotten of Him ; then the heart is to be established, fixed, settled in its affections on God—on the Lord, who says, "I will come for you," or, as the word is, "*I am coming*," as if actually on the way,—oh, how will it clasp *Him* as the one blest object of Christian love ; meanwhile, sin will be in abeyance, the flesh will be mortified, and so the heart will be established unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, that He may *enjoy us* at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

The *fourth* chapter is our proper hope. He comes (verse 16) descending *for us* ; that is enough ; He descends for His own, to meet them ; which is all His love needs. Oh to have our souls in the simple meetness of this, nothing else is specified here, no home mentioned, no crown, no taking of His kingdom ; love says *it is enough to meet with its own, to take up its own*. There will be glory, doubtless ; but glory is not love. His love was the first thing from all eternity ; glory is its fruit, its gift. What is the

gift to the love of the Giver? what the crown to Christ? Do not our own poor hearts know a little of the simple preciousness of this? And such preciousness will all His saints have. Oh! what an uprising, when we shall all meet Him in the air; how different to now! For down here saints die—sorrow—have to separate.

“ Sorrows have crushed each heart,
 And bowed each head ;
 Ties have been rent apart,
 Tears have been shéd ;
 But when Thy loved face we see,
 And for ever dwell with Thee,
 Then we shall ever be
 With our loved Head.

Sweet will that meeting be,
 With those we mourn,
 Now sleeping calm in Thee,
 Till Thou return.
 Severed ties shall be no more,
 Tears and sighs for aye be o’er,
 Upward, upward, we shall soar,
 To share Thy throne.”

The *fifth* chapter, beloved, links in this blessed *hope* with the safe readiness of our whole nature

(see verse 23). The spirit is the Lord's, the soul is the Lord's, and the body is the Lord's—all "to be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;" a *present, personal sanctification*, that abiding in Him, during which there is no sin. We are to be holy—the body holy, and what motives to keep it so! It is loved of God, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ; it is to stand before the "Beama," and to be conformed in resurrection to the very body of Christ. The soul is holy, and the spirit holy. Paul puts the spirit first: "I pray God your whole *spirit*, etc." If our *spirit* be occupied with Christ, kept in His presence, free and happy, we need not fear as to the soul and body. May the Lord teach us and bless us in these meditations on His Word.

SWEET RE-UNIONS.*



H ! for the songs of gladness,
Sweet sounding through the air,
Oh ! for the no more sadness
Of all the ransomed there.

Oh ! for the long, long meeting,
Of Jesus with His own ;
Oh ! for the loved, loved greeting
Of pilgrims in their home.

Oh ! for the ' sweet re-union '
Of friend restored to friend—
That loved and long communion
Which never more shall end.

Oh ! for the life immortal,
For bodies like His own ;
Oh ! for within that portal
Which leads me to His throne.

Oh ! for the no more dying,
The no more oft distress,
The sweetness there of lying
For ever on His breast.

Oh ! for the joy of being
" For ever with the Lord,"
The long, sweet joy of seeing
How perfect was His Word.

* Suggested by the hymn, " Oh ! for the robes of whiteness."

PRECIOUS THINGS.

OR GARMENTS FOR GLORY AND FOR BEAUTY.

Exodus xxviii. and xxxix.

BELOVED, we are about to indulge in a few meditations upon the Holy Garments of Exodus xxviii., upon our Divine Aaron, the blessed Lord Himself. We shall dwell upon Him according to the shadows which are given to us in this chapter.

Verse 2. "And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, for glory and for beauty." And again, at the 4th verse: "And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a brodered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother and his sons, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office. And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen." And then at the 9th verse: "And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them

the names of the children of Israel ;" and so on to the 13th verse, and then follows the details of the breastplate of judgment, and after that the robe of the ephod, with the suspended bells and pomegranates alternating with each other, and after that the plate of pure gold upon the mitre, and then the embroidered coat of fine linen, and the girdle.

You will remark that these garments are expressly called *holy* garments ; they are also said to be " garments for glory and for beauty ; " but they could not have been garments " for glory and for beauty " if they had not been *holy* garments. For without holiness there could be no glory, no beauty ; holiness lies at the basis of the Divine character ; without it God would not be what He is. God's holiness is absolute. Mark the difference between holiness and innocence. Innocence is without the knowledge of evil ; but holiness involves a knowledge of, but separation *from* evil. There is in absolute holiness the entire absence of sin. Such is God's holiness, and ours also in our standing before God in Christ. *We are sanctified* in Christ Jesus. These garments

express the holiness of Aaron, and of Israel in Him; they tell of the peerless excellence of our Divine Aaron, and of our own excellence in Him.

It is an interesting question—Where were these garments worn? Some have thought in the most holy place; but no, only the pure white linen garments were worn there. The garb for the holy of holies was pure white, indicating that He was intrinsically holy and pure. It was as the spotless One that Jesus offered Himself unto God. As such He became our Saviour, as such He died; and although having sin *on* Him, He had no taint of sin *in* Him. If the Lord in death had had any spot of sin of His own, He could not have stood as our Substitute; and if, on rising from the dead, He had our sin still on Him, He could not have ascended to the Father. His very presence in heaven, the holiest of all, shows that sin *has been* once and for ever completely put away.

I would that you should gaze this morning upon the spotless One! As Aaron on the great day of atonement was habited, as he entered into the most

holy place, in nothing but garments of spotless white, so our Divine Aaron has entered heaven for us, and is now standing righteous, accepted in the presence of God for us.

As to the holiness of His nature, He was born holy, pure, sinless, and as I have said, in virtue of His holiness He was qualified to atone for our sin. He could die, "the just for the unjust, to bring sinners to God." When Aaron went into the holiest of all, it was to present the blood; He was alone with God, where, so to speak, there was seen only the blood; and it was, as we have been showing, in the linen garb only that he was robed. But the blood having been presented, as showing redemption accomplished, he then put aside the garments of white, and arrayed himself in the garments for glory and for beauty; these he wore in the holy place. By this act he seemed to say, "Sin having been put away, I can now take up Israel as my redeemed, for whom complete atonement had been made. From the neck downwards the garments represented Israel, in principle ourselves; but from the neck upwards, where

was the mitre and the golden plate, was that which represented Christ, who is our Head.

It is very important to mark the difference between Aaron first making atonement outside, in perfectness, and then as priest ministering unto God, arrayed in these holy garments, which were worn after atonement had been finished. The distinction involved is just the difference between atonement and priesthood. Let me give you five distinctions, which mark the difference between atonement and priesthood.

Atonement was but *one* act. As to atonement, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared *once* in the end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He died *once*, "the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." Having made an end of sin at the cross, He will die no more. Priesthood is of many acts.

Atonement is not only one act ; but it is *finished*. Priesthood consists in a succession of ever-continued actions ; so that it is not yet finished. When upon the tree the Lord said, "It is finished," all expiation, all atonement, was perfectly and for ever

accomplished. As I have often said, If all your sins were not then atoned for, they never will be; for He will never die again; and He is not making atonement now; no, we look not forward for any more atonement; but

“My soul looks *back* to see
The burden Thou didst bear,
When hanging on the accursed tree,
And knows her guilt was there.”

But priesthood is going on still; for eighteen hundred years, both while we wake and while we sleep, it is ever going on, and will yet go on; as we sing,—

“Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved to sin no more.”

Atonement has taken place *down here*; it was made on earth. But heaven, and not earth, is the true scene of priesthood. It was *outside the camp* that Christ was slain; it is *inside the veil* that as Priest He carries on His priestly work. There is, properly speaking, no priest down here. The high priest must go into the holiest, and that holy of holies was typical of heaven. His very entrance there showed *heaven to be* the true scene of priesthood. Paul

shows this in his letter to the Hebrews, where he teaches that no man could be a priest on earth, but one of the tribe of Levi, under the Aaronic economy; but our Lord, says the apostle, sprang out of *Judah*; therefore the Lord never was a priest on earth.

Atonement is *for the sinner*; priesthood is *for the saint*. By the atoning blood it is that the sinner has been saved; and, oh blessed truth! Christ having died, all that the sinner has to do for salvation is to turn his eye to this desert earth—to that cross where the Lord of life and glory hung, without the camp, and where by His death He has made a full end of sin, and blotted it all out for every one believing in Him. Priesthood, on the other hand, is for those who have believed. The Lord Jesus, on the ground of the efficacy of His precious atoning blood, is now carrying on His priestly offices.

Atonement was a thing of *death*; without shedding of blood there was no remission, the law demanding death. Priesthood is a thing of *life*. The Lord now “*ever liveth to make intercession.*” All these distinctions are important, especially in these times, as

shewing that all through these eighteen hundred years the Lord, who once died and rose, now lives to carry on His mediatorial work for us in the very presence of God; as He said, "If I wash you not," keep you not from the defilement and sins which are without and within, "You have no part with Me"—are not Mine. Hence, before God He keeps us in perfectness meet for the scene. Happy, blessed provision of His grace, beloved! So that during every moment of your existence He is there, and there for you. His priesthood cannot fail for one instant; "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." But when finished, when He comes out again, it will be to bless; as did Aaron on the evening of the great day of atonement.

But now as to these holy garments. They were—

1. The embroidered coat of fine linen.
2. The girdle of needlework.
3. The robe of the ephod.
4. The ephod itself.
5. The curious girdle of the ephod.
6. *The breastplate.*

7. The mitre, on which was the golden plate, or crown. (Chap. xxxix.)

Will you first of all notice the embroidered coat ? The embroidered coat was Aaron's innermost garment, worn next to his person, and was put on after the washing with water, as we see in Leviticus viii. This *inner* garment was all of *linen*. There, where no mortal eye could pierce, all was perfect. In heart and thought, in will and desire, the Lord was intrinsically perfect. The searching glance of Divine holiness could detect no spot or stain of sin in Him ; He was unsullied, He was pure, He was essentially and absolutely perfect.

I have said that whilst all, from the neck upwards, represents Christ ; all, from the neck downwards, in the person of Aaron, represented Israel ; or, as I have shewn, in principle, ourselves. Hence, because *in Him*, and *one with Him*, this perfectness we are now indicating is true of every saved one. We are perfect in His perfectness, comely in His comeliness ; and as, practically, we see Aaron putting on this garment of pure white, we are reminded of that

precept of the apostle: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." And again: "Put on the new man." For our standard comes of our standing; and as the latter is one of perfectness, oh! let us see to it that our life and walk correspond with our standing. We are perfect in His perfectness; therefore we are enjoined: "Be ye perfect." We are without blame before Him in love; hence the exhortation to walk unblameably and unreprieveably in His sight.

And you will notice this linen garment had no seam in it. It was all of woven work. (Exodus xxxix. 27.) Ah! you may lament the divisions of the people of God; but in truth the Church of God is *one*; there is no seam in it. You may belong to this church, or that church; or, like the dying malefactor, you may belong to no church; but it makes no difference as to your standing in the *true* church; for the church of Christ is *one*. It was predicted of His body: "A bone of it shall not be broken;" and of His mystical body, His church, there shall not be a marred or absent member. There can be no seam *in it*. Like His own garment, woven throughout,

the whole church of God is one ; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one body, and one Spirit in that one body ; and for that one church, there will be but one home ; and beyond all there will be but one glory, *His* glory, and one hope of the glory, and that hope to be with Him.

And, further, as to this linen garment, mark its texture ; it was all of *fine* linen. Not one uneven fibre—not a coarse thread was joined throughout it all. You may talk of an uneven, or of a coarse christian ; but, believe me, as seen in Christ, there is no such christian. As we are in the purpose and grace of God, all are of equal fineness. You may despise a believer because he does not see eye to eye with you ; but that is not *this* that we have here. And not only was every thread a fine thread ; but there was no inequality of fineness—each thread was alike and equally fine. We are all equally loved, equally redeemed, equally saved, and are together with Christ to be equally glorified. *Personally* we are different ; but not so in the Lord. This reminds one of the meat-offering, which was of the

finest flour ; not a single coarse or unequal particle. How unlike to all this, in themselves, for the most part, are believers !

If you find a christian with a loveable disposition, he may have inadequate views ; and on the contrary, you find a christian with clear views, but whose temper is unchristian—little, alas ! of the evenness of the fine linen—so little of the equality of the fine flour. It was so even with the Master's own disciples. John, by pre-eminence the disciple whom Jesus loved, was in a moment of evil betrayed to call down fire from heaven. Paul, who for the Lord's sake had braved unparalleled dangers, yet in a moment of weakness, lost confidence in God, and begged to be let down over the wall in a basket.

Thus, various are the inequalities in the children of God ; many coarse threads we see in one another ; but as *the Lord* sees us—and we are as Christ—there are none, all are alike fine. He sees us in all the beauty, and perfectness, and comeliness of His own beloved Son ; we are as the *fine* thread of that perfect garb of white.

And then, over this linen garment there was the robe of blue. This was indeed a garment for beauty. It was "*the robe*," altogether lovely, and was of *one piece*. Provision was made that it should not rend. That it may be worn, there must of necessity be a hole in its top. But the binding was such, that it was strong as breastplate of armour—none could rend it. That which Christ wears for Himself and for us is never to be rent. Unchangeably secure are we in His deep, eternal, and infinite love. No condemnation, no separation. Was there purity in the embroidered coat of the inner garb of Aaron? There is dignity, there is security, there is glory in this.

The *white*, I have said, indicated perfectness, the perfectness of the Lord and of all His saints; but blue is the heavenly color. This is a fresh characteristic. The Lord was pre-eminently heavenly. From all eternity, He was such *in perpetuity*; so that when He became incarnate, He could only say, "The Son of Man who *is* in heaven." The church also is heavenly: all the members are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ

Jesus. We *are* in His rank; we *shall be* in His glory. Said the Lord to His disciples about to be bereaved: "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." The divine Head is heavenly by emphasis, and each member shares in that heavenliness. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; we have a heavenly birth, born of the will of God, our character is a heavenly one; our calling is a heavenly calling, to be like Him who is the heavenly One; our hopes, our affections, are all bound up and linked with heaven—with Him who is gone there before us; our prospect as to the future is heavenly—to be *with Him*; seated now in spirit, and in the Person of our risen Head, in heavenly places; but by and bye to be manifestly revealed as participants in His glory; as He said, "The glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them;" being *one* with Him, we are to be glorified together. Meanwhile, He bids us conform our walk *and spirit* to this heavenly character, to live as

those who are risen and seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. "Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body."

This robe, like that of which we have spoken, was all of one piece—it was woven throughout. There was no seam, nothing of unevenness. It was by emphasis *the* robe covering the whole person of Aaron, all of blue, beautiful, comely, perfect. Its color, as we have said, tells of *the heavenly*. How are we reminded of the words of 1 Cor. xv.: "As is the heavenly One, so are they who are heavenly ones." They are in the same risen life; they are in the same righteousness; in the same peace: "My peace I give unto you." In the same love: "That the love wherewith thou hast loved Me may be in them." How wonderful, beloved! How blessed the sweet, precious teaching of this robe of blue! Oh, for hearts to take it all in.

But now, for a moment, let us look at the lowermost hem of the robe. What do we see? What, but

the golden bells and the pomegranates in alternate succession. All around the lower border of that robe is a golden bell and a pomegranate. How rich, truly! and how lovely! for the bells were of gold; and the pomegranates blue, and purple, and scarlet in their colorings. But what do they teach us? They teach—the bells do—that the High Priest is actually there, and in full energy of life and power in His service for us. It was only for a Levite to hear the sound of the bell, and on going out he could say: “I know that Aaron is there, and that he is alive.” The sound was enough. Were Aaron not alive, in action, there would be no response in the bells; like the sound of Acts i., which was *from* heaven, and which told of Him who was *in* heaven, even Jesus, who had said: “If I go not away the Comforter will not come.” But having gone the Comforter had come. Hence, He convinces us of righteousness, which Christ before God for us, is; else He could not be there. But where was that sound at Pentecost? it was down here in the very midst of the *disciples*—those members of His body; corresponding

to the lowermost hem on the person of Aaron—for Christ and His church form one new man. But there was fruit as well as sound; life as well as melody; and the fruit was uniform with the melody; not one more than the other. Where the Spirit is there will be corresponding fruit.

Were the bells off, as another has suggested, the garment would be silent; separated from Christ we have no joy, can give no testimony, can bear no fruit. Moreover, as again suggested: "It is just as we follow Him within the vail, and are subject to every motion of the head, the shoulders, and the heart of our High Priest, that we bear our proper witness for the living though hidden Christ. But the pomegranate tells of fruit. And if we are in communion with our Head, there will flow down the rich fruit, as there will be rich harmony—sweet music of testimony, joy, and praise in our life. And whilst the garment was extending far up the person of the high priest, these pomegranates and bells hung near to the ground. Though our Head is above, His members are to manifest the fruit.

and bear the testimony down here ; not fruit only, but joy ; for the bells may indicate joy also—joy in the midst of our testimony. But the fruitfulness and the joy will be alike in connection *with Him*, and must flow *from Him*. The bells were of gold ; *divine* joy, precious in its nature, and costly in its value. He, the divine One, who bought us with such a price, is the spring of all joy—the source of all fruitfulness : “ We rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” It is significant that the bells were attached to the high priest’s robe, that the sound of them might be heard when he went into, and when he came out of the holy place ; the sound of those bells was as music to the ear of God, when he went *in* ; and when he came *out*, their sound was as music to the ear of man. Thus will it be with Israel in the latter day.

But besides these fruits and these sounds, which came from the lowermost part of the garments, there was the unction of the Holy One, which descended from the head on which it was first poured, *down to the same*. The unction streamed from the

very hem ; so that *the lowliest got the most of it*. Oh ! dear friends, if I am only a thread in that garment, and can take my place low down, like Mary at His feet, I am where the poured-out unction descends, and am as He is, in the same anointing—the same unction of the Holy One—the same acceptance in the presence of God. But leaving now this robe of the ephod with its golden bells and its pomegranates, let us look at the girdle of needlework and the girdle of the ephod. The girdle of the ephod was fixed on the robe of blue, and went all around the high priest's person. It was of gold, and also of various colors, all indicative of precious truth. It was this belt which bound the ephod to Aaron's person. You will observe how largely *gold* mingles with these garments for glory and for beauty. It indicates the divine. The stones were embedded in *gold*. The bells were of *gold*. The breastplate was united to all, by means of gold. It is remarkable, there was no gold in the vail. There is no mention of it in 2 Chron. iii. 14. The vail was rent ; the Divine could not be rent.

The golden thread ran through the ephod, that it might not be rent. Cherubim were wrought into the vail. They were rent, when *it* was rent ; shewing us how we are crucified with Christ. But behold now the embroidered girdle. You see it all around the high priest's person. It was not a girdle this, for strength ; but for simply binding the ephod to the person. It adorned Aaron with the gold and the blue, and purple and scarlet, and the fine twined linen, and added to him all the value which each one of these possessed—the preciousness of the gold, the perfectness, heavenliness, and all the other qualities intended by the blue and the scarlet, and the fine twined linen. But the girdle of verse 4 is different. It speaks of *service* ; and the Lord is often, in the Word, shewn to us as being girded. He was by special emphasis, “the Servant.” He Himself said : “ I delight to do Thy will, O my God ; yea, Thy law is within my heart.” His whole life was one of service. Hence *we* see Him girded with the girdle—the emblem of *service*.

When He washed the disciples' feet, He took a towel, and *girded* Himself; and when He comes in glory, He will *gird* Himself, and come forth and serve us. (See Luke xii. 87.) For those whom He finds *watching*, will He gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and come forth and serve them. To those who love His appearing (2 Tim. iv. 8,) He will give a crown. To those working (Matt. xxv.) He will give cities. Thus for those *watching*, He will not only gird Himself, but will make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. The *watchers* get the best. Love delights in serving. Service is love's sweetest enjoyment. There is something beautiful in this posture of girding. I would like to dwell upon it for a little.

Do you ask *where* He wears this girdle? Hero in type, we have Him wearing the girdle round *His loins*. This He did, that in fullest power and strength He may be always ready for service for you and for me. Thus it was, He girded Himself for His work down here; and thus it is, He wears His girdle *now*. But when He comes forth for

judgment by and by, He will be girt about *the paps* with a *golden* girdle. O, think of Him as girded about the heart, the seat of His affections—as much as to say: “I must gird up my loins, surely, for my own. My girdle must not be loose; but all my *love*, especially, must be girt up for My saints in the day when the thunders of judgment, let loose for destruction, are rolling on every side.” Oh! what a word for His weak, trembling Israel, who will be saying: “How will it be with us in the day of His threatened vengeance?” Ah! beloved, you see He will have a special office to perform for His own in that day. He knows they will need His services in the moment of overwhelming indignation; therefore, He will be girt about *the paps*—about *His heart*, the seat of His *divine unchangeable affections*.

We have said, the Lord was a servant; but now did He serve? What was the principle of all His service?

Its blessedness consisted in His doing the will of *His Father*; in having no will apart from Him.

He did everything, as we see in John xvii., with this one object—*His Father's glory*. Let your eye rest for a moment upon that prayer of the blessed Lord. There we have Him as *Servant*, and as *Son*. And what is the very first petition He breathes forth? “Father, the hour is come; glorify,” not *the* Son, (as we have been reminded) but, “*Thy* Son.” And why this desire? Is it that “*I* may be glorified?” Oh! no. “That *Thy* Son also,” (again, not “*the* Son”)—“that *Thy* Son also may glorify Thee.” He desires no glory for Himself, apart from His Father; but as “*Thy* Son,” it is, that He asks the Father to glorify Him. And then in the 2nd verse: “As *Thou* hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as,”—“I have redeemed?—as many as *I* have purchased?”—is it so beloved? Ah, no! but “that He should give eternal life to as many as *Thou* hast given Him.” Oh, how He refers all to His Father! Let us go on—*3rd verse*: “And this is life eternal,” “that they may know *Me*?” Oh! no; but “that they may know *Thee*,”

the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom *Thou* hast sent." "I have glorified *THEE* on the earth, I have finished the work which *Thou* gavest Me to do." "I am *Thy* Servant, to do the great work which *Thou* gavest Me to do." "And now, O Father, glorify *Thou* Me with *Thine* own self, with the glory which I had," not alone, but "with *Thee* before the world was." "The glory which I had with *Thee*"—not dissociating for one moment *His* own glory from *His* Father." "I have manifested *Thy* Name unto the men which *Thou* gavest Me out of the world; *Thine* they were, and *Thou* gavest them Me, and they have kept *Thy* Word." Dear friends, we need not go on with this chapter; we have seen enough to shew that the blessedness of the Lord, as Servant, consisted in knowing and doing the will of *His* Father; and that *your* blessedness and *mine*, consists in simply and only doing the same. You may rest assured that if what you are doing under the name of service, is being done for *self*—if self be the centre of your work, or of your actions, then you are not really serving, you are not *doing it simply* and only for your Father. Oh! how

different would be our service, if we first looked up and enquired: "Lord, what wilt *Thou* have me to do? Shall I take *this work* in hand, or shall I not?" Remember, that nothing can claim the name of *service*, but what is done for Him. When the Lord had to do anything, it was with this thought that He girded Himself:—This is for my Father's glory? And we also are to be girded about the loins with this principle, of doing *all* for *Him*.

But look now at another thing. You will notice that in connexion with the breastplate are the Urim and Thummim, which Israel consulted in all times of need, and in all cases of perplexity. They were put *in* the breastplate, not *on* it, as were the precious stones; but folded in it. We are not told what they were. We do not know how they imparted the needed guidance; but there they were, in seeming mystery, lodged for Israel in the high priestly robe. You know that Urim and Thummim, as to the words, signify "light and perfection"—beautifully comprising all that the sinner or God can require. "Light" claimed all from Israel that God could

possibly require, and "perfection" shewed that God on His part had found in Himself all that Israel could need.

The stones were set all about this light and perfection of God; just as all the redeemed are around God;—God the centre of all; so here we have these lines of stones placed in order, like the arrangement of the tents all round the tabernacle—God in the midst of all.

But then, as to the guiding or leading which God gave to Israel through this mysterious way; we beloved, have something, may I not say, far beyond it. Says God, in the 32nd Psalm, "I will guide thee *with Mine eye*." We have no need now, as Israel of old, to resort, in order to know God's mind, (as with Urim and Thummim) to any one particular spot. God never leaves, but ever follows His child, who has but to look up and watch His eye. Oh! ye perplexed and troubled ones! now out on the lonely desert, threading the intricacies of the wilderness path, often dark, often mazy, have you *come to a point in the journey where two paths*

present themselves for your choice ? You have only to look upwards to your Father's eye ; and as that eye alights upon your path, and sheds its radiance upon the way which your Father would have you pursue, the perplexity vanishes, and trustfully you may follow on. But there is something more. Who was it at that last supper, who found out the secrets of the Master's mind as to the traitor ? Was it not he who leaned upon His bosom ? It was John, who was so near, in that sweet resting place, that when the Lord rested he rested, and that when the Lord rose, the disciple rose also. Ah ! beloved, you and I are entitled to be there, to rest our head upon His bosom, and in that position of calm and hallowed intimacy to see His eye for our direction down here, and to know the very secrets of His heart of love, to go where He goes, to rest where He rests, to follow where He leads.

The very thought of the beautiful hymn we have been singing—

“ A mind at perfect peace with God,”
brings us at once into association with what we

were saying yesterday morning. We then indulged in a meditation on what made up the garments of Aaron, when he went into the holy place, especially upon the white linen garb, as unfolding the utmost purity and righteousness of our Divine Aaron, in which He stands in peace before God; we are also in the same place with Him. How is it that so few *know* themselves there, that they so little understand or enjoy the place which the Lord has given them; and who are saying in doubt and gloom, "I do not know if I am a Christian; I do not know what I am, or where I am?" Why, beloved, *here you are*, right down upon His very heart, set as a jewel upon His very arm, *that* is where you are, you who believe ever so little, as one has said, "Little faith brings a soul into heaven, and great faith brings heaven into the soul." But be it little or great—

"So near, so very near to God,
Nearer you *cannot* be,
For in the Person of His Son,
You are as near as He."

Ah yes! we are not only near. We are one with

Him. Oneness is far more than union. A man might hate his wife to whom he is *united*; but, says the apostle, "No man ever yet hated what is *himself*," viz: his own flesh. And you are *that*, being of His flesh and of His bones. Eve was the true picture of oneness; she was *in* Adam when he slept; but during his sleep, she was taken *out* of him, and upon awaking was found with him. So in the purposes of God, His church was in Christ from all eternity; and when He rose out of the sleep of death, we who were in Him were raised up together and are now seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. That which constituted Eve, the bone out of which God builded the woman, was as *old as Adam*, and was possessed of the *same* life. So also Christ and His church. Dear friends, if you understand this, you will see what *true* oneness is, how that Christ's place is your place, that His joy before God is your joy; that His inheritance is your inheritance.

In the glory we shall be manifestly one. There will be no divided body then; no alienation then. God will have all in love in His own home, with its

many abodes. He will have buried, annihilated, for ever, all differences, beneath the one glorious canopy of His boundless grace and righteousness. All will be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. But who can tell it ? Not a wrinkle, not a spot !

“Who shall to me that joy
Of saint-thronged courts declare,
Full of that constant sweet employ,
My spirit longs to share.
That rest secure from ill,
No cloud or grief e'er stains,
Unfailing praise each heart doth fill,
And love eternal reigns.”

We have already spoken of the robe of the ephod of blue. But now will you lift your eye upon that which surmounts that robe. Upon the shoulders of the ephod there are two onyx stones, and upon the breastplate are other stones.

Will you mark an important difference between the stones upon the shoulder and those upon the breast. The onyx stones upon the shoulder were of *one color*—there was no difference ; but among the *stones upon the breast*, no two were alike. There

was emerald, there was blue, there was red, and every gorgeous color, all in beautiful variety. But on the shoulder there were the two onyx stones, of one and the same color. There is an all-likeness, and yet a wondrous variedness, in all who are redeemed. And now, more particularly as to these onyx stones. Where do we find the onyx stone first? The earliest mention of it is in Genesis ii. ; the next is here in Exodus ; then again we find it in Ezekiel ; and lastly, in the Revelation. We first see it, amid the unfallen glories of Eden ; but with no names engraven on it there—no inscription there, as if to shew that the mark of property—of true eternal ownership, could not be affixed to these stones, until redemption—until the price, so to speak, had been paid. But where do we next meet with them? Upon the shoulders of the high priest, —shining there—yea brightly bearing the names of Israel's tribes.

Ah ! beloved, in virtue of His own atoning blood, our High Priest has raised these stones, from earth to Himself, and has engraven upon them names which

associate them with all the dignity and glory of His own Person. See these stones, both of one color, shining resplendently on Aaron's shoulders. Thus Christ bears His redeemed upon His shoulders; all His saints are there; each one supported by His strength; and all in relation to each other, and to Him, are one family, have one faith, one blessed and glorious salvation, one God, one heaven. Notwithstanding all our differences, we who are members of His body, are in the one calling, the one hope.

This is the onyx stone truth: the oneness, the all-likeness of believers. On the shoulder, what a wondrous sameness! But on the breast, what a variety! *I* have not *your* gifts, and *you* have not *my* gifts; *your* calling as to service is not *mine*, nor mine *your's*. Paul was not as John, nor John as Paul; each had his own special measure of grace—his own gift. One labourer need not envy another; when we get up together into the glory, how shall we be sorry that here we ever looked coldly upon one whom God might be owning more than another. *Each one of you* has his own special work for God;

and that work no one else can do ; if you leave it undone, what loss ! You will suffer loss—loss of happiness, loss of reward.

But now, as to the stones upon the breastplate ; there they are in such endless variety, all beautiful, and all placed according to Divine arrangement. The names on the onyx stones upon the shoulder, were all engraven according to priority of *birth* ; but those upon the breastplate were arranged in the order of their *tribes*. How beautiful to see them set in the gold ! and worn there before the Lord continually ; so that the Lord could never look upon Aaron, without looking on them. And they must have been, so to speak, covered with the glory gleaming from the light of the sanctuary. Oh ! precious thought ! Our God cannot look upon Christ, without seeing you and me. Oh ! wondrous mystery ! Oh, depths and heights of divine grace and love ! that the Lord of life and glory should have so intimately united Himself with us poor lost ones that we were, sinners—saved, redeemed sinners that we now are, that His Father cannot see Him, cannot have com-

munion with *Him*, without having communion with *us*. How precious! the Father's eye cannot rest upon His Son in response to His Son's ineffable delight, but it must drop upon these stones; must gaze upon each one. Oh! beloved, do you see it? There you are; *your* place and *mine*—right down, down, down upon His breast, and upon His shoulder!

And those stones upon the shoulder and upon the breastplate were not only arranged; they were all embedded in gold, all set, shall I say, in Divine casings.

For gold speaks, as we have said, of the Divine. Ah! thus blessedly it is, *we are brought into God*. He who "died the just for the unjust," died for what purpose? Why *did* He die? Was it merely to pluck us from the abyss of an endless woe? Was it merely to save us from hell? Oh, no! not merely for this; He died "*to bring us to God*." Yea! to bring us INTO God. We are *in Christ*, who is in God; taken up as His jewels, His precious stones, the purchase of Christ; Christ and His people equally *near*, as were Aaron and the stones to the Divine *glory*, nay equally in its very midst!

But another thing—the stones were linked *together*. They were linked by lovely chains of gold—little golden clasps bound them, shall I say, to each other, and to Aaron.

We cannot be separated from *Him*, nor can we be separated from each other. It is all aside from the truth, to talk of a really separated, divided church; there is no such thing. The church, as God sees it in Christ, is one; and nothing, either of man or the devil, can ever separate that church from its risen and glorified Head; and nothing can separate the members of that church from each other. Election is not the gospel; but election is precious. The gospel is for the sinner; election for the believer. We are bound up together as one in eternal counsel—in divine electing love. Oh! we need not cherish feelings of envy—of animosity against another, because his views of truth may not correspond with our own; or because he may not be shaping his course to our own. For aught I know, I may be bound by one of these lovely links to the very one whom now I am treating with indifference.

or dislike ; or against whom I am cherishing an unloving spirit. Gaze on, beloved, on this robe ! Practically and sinfully, Judah might have vexed Ephraim, and Ephraim might have vexed Judah ; but in God's thoughts, there they are, side by side in the breastplate, and on the shoulders ! they could not help themselves ! And so with those now divided, for aught you know, the offender and the offended may be side by side in the glory ! For aught I know *you* may be the nearest in the divine arrangements, as to the glory, to the one against whom you have bitterly sinned. Happy theme ! beloved, for I might go on and on about these stones, and the rings, and the wreathen chains, and the ouches, all indicating the position of unity, and safety, and acceptance of each child of God, in association with the risen Lord ; so that in the presence of God, each one is there in a divine right ; for the Lord brings us in along with Himself, giving us the same title to that presence which He Himself possesses !

But further, each stone, as I have said, had on it a *name*. *There was no name on the stones in Eden ; but*

after atonement had been made, we find these stones bearing God-given names ; and though Israel for the present may seem to be lost, the stones have revival in Ezekiel, and are in the *New Jerusalem*. No stone bearing the divine inscription can be finally lost. And as with Israel, so with *us*: no child of God can perish. Jesus Himself said of His own, "My sheep shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." He puts a name on each, and says, "I have called thee by thy name—thou art Mine;" that name firmly fixed as on stone—upon His heart, can never be erased. Each name had a significance. Asshur, for example, signifies blessedness. Says God of His people, "Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord." "Blessed are the meek." "Blessed are the pure in heart," and so on. Oh! the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity. Ah, who can tell the blessedness of those "who are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus." Ephraim signifies "fruitfulness." Manasseh, "forgetfulness." All believers should be

fruitful; all believers are forgiven. But there is more than forgiveness here. There is forgetfulness; sins not only forgiven, but forgotten. Happy gospel truth! beloved—"And your sins and iniquities will I remember no more." God is love. But God is righteous. The cross of Christ is the manifestation of both. By the cross, sin has been put away, so that God in His love can forgive and forget; nay, can embrace the sinner who believes. Imagine a father, from whose roof a son had wandered. But the father is the father still; his heart yearns for his child, would give worlds to see him again. By and by, wretched but repentant, he is again in his home! But what says that Father? Not a word—not a word; the repentance is deep, the change is real; all the past is buried in that love which exceeds everything. Beloved, you can understand the picture; not only forgiveness; but God Himself forgetting everything—all offences buried beneath the ocean of a Saviour's merit, put away by the fountain of a Saviour's blood.

But we, we shall remember; we shall never cease

to raise that song, "Unto Him that loved (loves) us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood."

I wonder, has He a name for each of us. Why should we be lacking in a blessedness which Israel enjoyed? Long before Abram knew, God had given him a name—"Abraham." All nations in the earth shall be blessed in him. And then Jacob. Ah! might God have said, "Little does he know I have another name for him than Jacob. He shall be Israel—'A prince with God.'"¹ It is something like what we get in Rev. ii.; the white stone, bearing the *new* name, which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it. Who but God and ourselves will know of that new name in that day of His love?

And little do we now know the name by which God has known *us* from eternity; little do you think of that individuality of interest which we now have in His love and grace, and which will be manifested in that day. But farther.

Each name was durable, engraven on *stone*! Oh, how sweet to muse over it amidst all that is unending here. Moreover, how secure. And more-

over what a company of stones! But not one to be overlooked—all wanted to lend completeness to the whole. And they were all alike precious. All God's saints as seen in Christ are alike precious to His heart. To you who believe He is precious, or to you who believe He is *the preciousness*. No eye but the believer's can discern His beauty—His loveliness; and as we most need, or realize our need of His grace and love, so is the preciousness of it. Dear children of God! take your place in all this; and know that not only is He *your preciousness*, but that you are *His* preciousness. Ah! is some one saying, "No one understands *me*, I am precious to none." Beloved child of God! see here on this jewelled breastplate what His estimate of you is, how precious you are. He has embedded you as *His* jewel in pure gold. When the Lord gets hold of you in the glory He will say, "I am glad to have given My life for you, My blood has purchased what is most costly, most precious to me; you have given me an opportunity of unfolding My glory." Like *the artist who delights in the plate that serves him*

well to illustrate what is in him, so the saved sinner will be, as it were, the mirror, through Christ, of God's *boundless*, ineffable, and eternal love.

And now mark how all these stones were connected with Aaron. 'The high priest would not be without them ; the holy garb for beauty would not be complete. And so you have no need to ask, shall I ever be in heaven ? The Lord will not be there without you. You have only to ask, have I ever known myself to be a sinner ? And, do I know Jesus as my Saviour ? If you believe on Him as your Saviour, you will never come into judgment. What ! when He comes will it be to judge the stones upon His very heart ? What ! will He judge the bride of His pledged affections ? What ! will He judge the members of His own body ? No, indeed, they have been judged—judged in Christ when He bore the curse, the doom, the condemnation on the tree. When Christ was liberated, you were discharged also ; and now one with Him, and seated with Him in heavenly places, how safe !

“ More happy, but not more secure,
The glorified spirits in heaven.”

We have observed how the onyx stones were in Eden. It is interesting, according to the meaning of the name, which signifies the "breaking forth of glory," to trace these stones, now for a while appearing, and then for a time apparently lost, and then, by and bye, re-appearing again in revived and enhanced beauty—God getting, so to speak, His own revival of His own ways and purposes of love. For after that sin had come in by the fall, and had thrown its deep shadow over Eden and Eden's glory, destroying or dimming the brightness of these stones, how blessed to see them reviving again as here in Exodus! Then after gleaming with resplendent lustre upon the Aaronic shoulder, and after complete failure had impressed its stamp upon the Mosaic economy, and the kingly rule which succeeded it, how happy to meet with them again, revived and beautiful amid the fair glory of the millennial age! and then, after the millennium, and after the terrible wrath, in the midst of which the earth and the heavens will be *dissolved* by fire, there will emerge the new heavens *and the new earth*, in the which these stones will

shine again amid the four-square city of the new Jerusalem, the scene of their final glory, the place of their eternal establishment.

Thus, from one end of the Word to the other, we get these stones of preciousness. Man may fail, and apparently hinder the divine schemes; but again and again God gets His revival, until *all* His wondrous purposes are finally accomplished and established. There will be the new heavens and new earth, wherein “dwelleth” righteousness; not “reigneth,” which will be true in millennial days; but righteousness reigning supposes that there will be something to overcome, some rule, some authority not yet put down; but hereafter, in the long eternal state, beloved, righteousness will finally and for ever “*dwell*.” Ah! then, no more David’s sword! No Gog or Magog! No sin to put down, no holiness to be assailed! But God keeping His sabbath—working, perchance, in all other fields of creation, guiding worlds by His hand, stars in their course, but here at rest. He keeps His sabbath in His own *Son*; also, shall I say in His redeemed ones in *Him*?

Dear friends, I would fain show you what faith sees in these precious stones, as they are beheld in the person of Aaron. And I would ask, what are you doing with yourself? What are you doing with God's jewel? If you had a jewel, would you cast it into the mire? Would that be a suitable place for a jewel? Where are you living? How are you living? Are you here—here consciously on the Lord's bosom, resting in His affections—is it so, beloved? With such a place, what manner of persons ought we to be as believers? O! if we would live the highest practical holiness, we must first know the exalted place which God has given us. If I know that I am a prince, can I live as a pauper? But if I do not know what I am, or what I have—whether I am a child of God or no—I shall probably go on with self, and with the world; but if I know myself to be an heir of God, a joint-heir with Christ, where or what will be my place down here? Oh, beloved, do not have the *name* of Christ on your *lips*, if you bear not the impress of Christ in your *life*. Come out on your true side! It is the holy

knowledge of position that gives the highest life. I *am* His jewel, to Him so costly, so precious, that He bought me with His own blood, and am I to use myself as I please? Oh! no, no, no; I am not my own to use. Just imagine myself down on His heart, and then my life gone out in some act of wrong. Just imagine myself yonder in the Person of my living Head, in calm acceptance there—"inside the veil;" and yet my spirit down here in levity, and worldliness, and God-forgetfulness. Oh! no, am I not bound for yonder glory; am I not born for a throne; am I not chosen for a great inheritance, am I not a jewel of Christ to shine in that day, when

"Crowns on crowns will shortly meet,
Upon His loved, loved brow."

All this comes out in the jewel-truth. It touches us under all circumstances, in our ways and in our words, and in all that we do. A jewel of heaven is not to be used and abused by Satan, as if it were his property. We are the property of Christ: the purchase of the precious blood of Christ.

But look again at the High Priest. We have seen

him from the neck downwards ; but now let us look at him from the neck upwards. We see his head covered with the mitre. The women were taught to cover their heads as a token of subjection, and here we have our High Priest standing with covered brow, as subject to God, and subject too on our behalf. He wears the mitre on His head ; the head is the seat of the will, the seat of thought, the seat of purpose ; and He has you, beloved, on His thought and in His purpose, and that purpose is, notwithstanding all your failures, to bring you to glory.

We were looking, remember, at the five distinctions between atonement and priesthood. The Lord is no longer *atoning* ; but He is gone in yonder to fulfil His priestly office ; and what now is He doing there ? He is bearing the sins of your holy things, sins which are ours as *believers*. If I look at my sins as a *sinner*, I see the dread load at the cross laid on Him, borne away by Him, and my soul is comforted. But after conversion my sins are the sins of a *believer*—of *His redeemed one*, and although they do not *touch my standing*, they touch my peace, they touch

my communion and service. But what am I to do ? There are two precious words in John's first epistle. In chap. ii. 1 we read, "If any man sin (or have sinned), we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." In chap. i. 9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Such is the provision for sin, for sins in general, for all our sins. How precious ! how needed ! The word iniquity is used in connection with our holy things. Our High Priest bears "*the iniquity*" of our holy things—all the evil and failure on our part connected with them. Oh needed, loving provision of our God ! There He stands ; His brow, as He appears before God, is beheld in its effulgence of divine light and glory, bearing *for us*, through His own merit, the mystic inscription—"HOLINESS TO THE LORD."

That inscription, beloved, is recorded in gold—precious and enduring substance. It is engraven on a plate, or flower of gold—a golden flower never to fade—beautiful on the forehead of Aaron, placed so

conspicuously that he could not be before God, and it not before His divine complacent eye. "*Holiness to the Lord,*" for Israel, was always there. Like the fire on the altar, which was always burning, that no poor sinner could come with a sacrifice and find no fire—no acceptable time; so now, no worshipper, laden with the sins of his holy things, can ever fail to have his need met by that which was always upon the golden plate, or flower of the mitre. And oh! why was it there? Was it merely that their iniquity may be put away? No, indeed. It was that "*they,*" either the holy things themselves, or *the people* whose things they were, "*might be accepted.*" Oh, to know and believe this for ourselves. All our iniquities, the sins of our holy things, gone. Our holy things and ourselves *accepted*. Accepted in Aaron. Accepted in the Beloved.

"Not a stain, a holy nation;
Ours is such a full salvation!"

What days of sorrow and dejection of soul would the belief of this save us! Think how blessed! a *God-man between* God and us. None of our iniqui-

ties reaching God. All taken in hand by Him who is there for us. All that is of His own creating He presents. All that is ours, He provides against, by ever being in the presence of God—what indeed we in ourselves are not—“*Holiness to the Lord.*”

Let me name two points in which, as to holy things, there is special failure. We fail in our worship. We fail in our service. As to our worship, have you never in moments of communion heard the Lord's voice, but failed in obeying it. Or have you never professedly breathed desire into His ear and soon after, your soul being out of communion, have you not forgotten your request? And have you never, being in worship, having joy, love, delight, before Him, so forgotten with whom you were, that your thoughts have gone from Him, and He has been left *alone* in the place in which you have worshipped? Ah! little is there of our worship which, like the fire of the burnt-offering, ascended upwards with acceptance! But how much of “iniquity” is consumed by the fire, and as mere ashes, goes downwards! All that is not of God—all that is

of *self*, must be burnt up. When one is singing precious words, and the heart does not respond oh, what ashes! The same with our service—doing anything for the approval of self, or of others, and not as to the Lord, it will all be burned up, and will not stand in that day. Nothing will stand then but what is of God. For *the sins* of our service, happily, beloved, there is this crown, this mitre on the brow of our High Priest. But for the *service*, where acceptable, there are special rewards. There are three crowns spoken of. The crown of glory, the crown of righteousness, and the crown of life. The crown of glory is connected with *elders*, and evidently has special reference to those who *feed* Christ's flock. When the chief Shepherd shall appear, they are to receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

And there is the crown of life, which is connected in Rev. iii. with martyrdom, with those who are "*faithful unto death.*" And then the crown of righteousness, for all *who love His appearing*. Each *one bears a relation* to our life, our affections, and *our service*.

These three crowns remind me of three things far different, connected with service, viz : wood, hay, and stubble. " If any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble ; every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it." Mark, Paul speaks of the wood, hay, and stubble being built on the foundation, as having reference to *what we do, as believers*. Only the silver and gold, only that which is divine, which is of God, will stand. Stubble speaks of that which is evidently bad, fit only for the fire ; but hay is lovely and beautiful ; how refreshing in life, and how sweet in death ; ripe for use, beautiful and lovely apparently—reminding us of merely natural gifts, eloquence, natural affection. All these are of *nature* ; and if the service consists in *these only*, it will, like the hay, be fit only for the burning. And then there is the " wood," that which is more than beautiful, something for ornament or use ; but however apparently useful, if our services be not of God, they will be burnt up. Oh ! when one looks at *Him*, and sees *Him* yonder bearing all the iniquity of

persuade you, that you are too great a sinner ; but remember, that it is a faithful saying, “ that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—*sinners*, of whom,” adds the apostle, “ I am chief.”

He took the place of the chief of sinners, and he took the place of less than the least of all saints, and he would have added to these that he was, as to himself, an unprofitable servant. He called himself the chief of sinners, because he would magnify the readiness and efficacy of atoning blood ; and he reckoned himself as less than the least of all saints, to magnify the riches of the grace of God. How sweet for you and me to say, “ I am all emptiness ; but this is all my fulness ” ; faith takes the fulness which God gives. “ Be it unto you according to your faith.” The Lord, beloved, pour richly into your soul the treasures of His peace and love ; the Lord give you to know what is His estimate of you, how precious you are in His sight, and how blessed is the scene to which, in Christ, He brings you ; for you are where He is, holy before God, righteous, *accepted in the Beloved.*

“ Rise, my soul ! behold 'tis Jesus,
Jesus fills thy wondering eyes ;
 See Him now in glory seated,
 Where thy sins no more can rise.

There in righteousness transcendent,
 Lo ! He doth in heaven appear,
 Shows the *blood of His atonement,*
 As thy title to be there.

All thy sins were laid upon Him,
 Jesus bore them on the tree,
 God, who knew them, laid them on Him,
 And believing, *thou art free.*

God now brings thee to His dwelling,
 Spreads for thee His feast divine,
 Bids thee welcome, ever telling,
 What a portion there is thine.

In that circle, of God's favour,
 Circle of the Father's love,
 All is *rest, and rest for ever ;*
All is perfectness above.

Blessed, glorious word, “ for ever ! ”
 Yea, “ for ever ! ” is the word ;
 Nothing can the ransomed sever,
Nought divide them from the Lord.”

all you want is to take and enjoy it. Remember, you have two natures, which demand to be fed ; the *old* nature is clamorous for food ; it can live only on corruption. The *new* nature must have *Christ* ; if you feed not on *Him*, you have nothing. How solemn ! if not feeding on Christ through the Word, I am in spiritual decay, I have *no* strength, *no* real power for service, *no* enjoyment of communion. The way to starve the old nature is to feed the new. They cannot both thrive together. Is it not so, beloved ?

And now the same with the *altar* as the manna. We are never in a position in which we cannot have an altar. Did you ever think of Abram, (see Genesis xii.), how in leaving his own country he went as far from it as he could ; even when famine overtook him ; instead of going back into Mesopotamia, which was near, he put all Canaan between him and it, by going down into Egypt. Better not to have left Canaan, for God could have provided for him there ; yet on leaving it he might easily have *reached the land* of his fathers. But his mind was

not in it; as Paul said, If his *mind* had been in that country whence he came out, "he might have had opportunity to have returned." But was Abram's sin in going down to Egypt to separate him from his altar? Ah no! Some think his altar was simply for worship; that is but half the truth, it was more; in regaining his altar it was as if he had said, "I am a poor sinner." The altar would have the sacrifice. Oh never let your sin keep you away from Christ! If the manna was everywhere, the altar could be reached from everywhere too; there is the provision; there is a way to Christ wherever I am. From the far off land Abraham could go back to his altar; from the far land the prodigal could reach his father. Ah, yes, from *all* places, and at *all* times, from the paths of our wanderings, from the couch of death, "or in living, or in dying," wherever I am, there is a way to the precious blood of Christ.

With the manna and the altar, then, what a provision! the one for my sustenance, the other for my sin—for worship, for fellowship one with another.

for communion with God. Great indeed is the supply. Ah, if our souls are not happy, if our consciences are not pure, it is no fault of our God. All things are ours. In risen life along with Christ we are blest with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

And as to all else we *need*, God has made provision. We are told Jacob was "a perfect man (so the word is), living in tents." As if God had said, "He has all in the promises; he wants nothing here." The tent was the expression of this. Thus, beloved, Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, and God in grace is with us every step of the journey. We have the manna for present use. Moreover, we have the tent for the wilderness, and Canaan in sight; we are on the very skirts of the glory *nearing* home; and as we feast by the way, the Lord is saying to us, "This is the Bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die." And the blessing connected with it is eternal life. How do I know? Because *I have eaten of this Bread*, and because He hath said

“If any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever;” so that eating, we shall *live*. Can you doubt, beloved, after that? Oh! you know you have eaten of Christ; you know you are (though, alas! too little) eating of Christ; and therefore you shall live *for ever*. This is the blessed, never-to-be-forgotten Word of God. But how wonderful is this! “As I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me—even he shall live by Me.” As man He was dependent on God; as man He lived on His Father; as Son He drew His joy, His delight from Him. So we, beloved, who in ourselves are poor and empty, when united to Him, are filled out of His fulness. Oh! dear friends, what was it that gave us peace and rest when converted? Was it not the Word of Christ? How blessed! eternal life, resurrection, and hope of glory—all ours, in simply believing.

And now, in conclusion, there are just two thoughts I should like to leave with you; the one for the sinner; the other for the saint. First, God has left *no* obstacle between Him and the sinner. The *manna* was given down on the ground. Few of

you christians, perhaps, know what real hunger is, because you have been always fed with a little of Christ here and there; yes, you know Him; but you may not know what real hunger is. In Mayo, in 1847, a poor man said he was dying; he was lying on the road in utter famine; when one gave him bread, O how he clutched it! the man was lying where there was no bread. A dying Israelite, outside, must die *on* the manna. The Lord help you if you die! You are near the manna; it is not perched on some lofty cedar beyond your reach; but it is on the ground, and so low that the vilest sinner need but stoop to take it, and if he die, must die with the manna all around, within reach of his dying arm. May the Lord help you, now, to stoop and take, to believe and live.

Well, then, with the altar there were no steps; an aged one, or an infant, could not get to it if it had steps; but the altar was on the very level with the one who needed it. Christ came down to where we are; nay, He is now for us without an effort, or *any required elevation* of ours. "The Word is nigh

thee, even in thy mouth." The same with Israel; they had not to make a pole, nor even to touch it; the dying Israelite had but to *look* at the brazen serpent. Oh! is there one here to-day unconverted? Your mother, perhaps from the time you lay on the bend of her arm, has prayed: "Oh! that my child may live before Thee." Your father may be a righteous man, a living testimony for Jesus. Oh! sinner, sinner! that mother's kiss, that father's life, will be remembered in hell! Oh! to remember in time. Like a family in Hampshire; the father died with the life-long prayer for his sons, *un-*answered; but when dead, his sons said, "If *he* died unhappy (which he did) because of us, what shall *we* do?" Ah! sinner, there is no dying of hunger, but *on* the very manna. Oh! to put out your hand and take it now. *Now* is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."

The other thought is for us christians. In their last days in the wilderness there was nothing but Jordan between Israel and the Land. And we are just now in like position; we are nearing the glory.

CONFLICT AND REST.

ROMANS vii. ; PSALM i.

HERE is, I have thought, a sweet agreement, along with a marked difference, existing between Rom vii. and Psalm i. In the one, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man : " in the other, " His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night," (lie down in the green pastures, "*day and night*," resting and feeding). In both cases it is the *new nature*, whose delight is in the law of the Lord, a nature divinely implanted, a nature according to God ; and of course its delight is in Him who gave it, not only from, but *for Himself*. Oh ! how sweet to know, instinctively, that we *have* this nature ! that it turns again and again towards His holiness *and His love*, both which shine out in His *law*, for it

is the law which commends His holiness; and it is the law which not only shews that we *may*, but directly tells us to *love God*, and this is just what the new nature would delight to do; not only to have delight, *joy*, complacent joy; but the delight, the joy, is in the *law*. But why delight in the law? Because it is the law of the Lord, and because His requirements are just what the new nature loves, and because the law not only permits, but enjoins upon us *joy* in God, delight in His holiness, and love for Himself. Are we not glad that we may thus spend all our complacency and all *our love* on the blessed Lord? In both, therefore, it is the same principle, namely, delighting in the law of the Lord.

But then, associated with the delight in the law of Rom. vii., is the "O wretched man." Associated with the other, Psalm i., is "O the *blessedness* of the man" who is like a tree planted by the river of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." The one speaking in Romans is "wretched;" the other "blessed." "Blessed is

JEHOVAH-JESUS.

I WANT a sight of Jesus,
Whose goings were of old ;
Who early in the ancient days,
Did oft His grace unfold.
I want Jehovah-Jesus,
The true Belov'd, to know ;
Whose chief rejoicings were with men,
His best delights below.

I want that timeless Lover,
To whom 'twas good to see,
In Eden bliss—its love, its joy—
What His own Church would be ;
Who saw in man's creation,
So perfect and so fair,
An image of th' eternal form
Which He Himself would wear.

I want the Man Christ Jesus,
Whom Godhead dwells within,
Who all our griefs and sorrows bore,
Who died our death for sin.
I want the same blest visage,
The same once suffering brow,
That body broken for us here,
But bright with glory now.

I want the Lord once treading
On Galilean sea,—
To gaze upon each wound He bore
When hanging on the tree.
I long Himself to worship,
Heaven's golden gates within,
There own the sorrows which He bore—
Whilst dying for our sin.

I want that Friend of Bethany,
Who in its home oft found
A solace for His weariness,
(The place was holy ground.)

I want that sweet communion,
Thy presence will afford ;
To dwell in glorious union,
For ever with the Lord.

I want, as Thy beloved,
To lie upon Thy breast ;
To call Thee my Beloved,
And tell Thee I am blest.
I want, (all wants in one, Lord,)
No more a veil between,
To know Thee, love Thee as Thou art,
And see as Thou art seen.

MARY'S GREAT LOVE ;

OR

THE POWER OF A PERSON.

John xx., in connection with Psalm lxiii., xxxvi.

WHAT God was to the Psalmist in the 68rd and 36th Psalms, that the Lord was to Mary. They had both one Object of desire—one Person for whom their soul longed.

Beloved, how wonderful is love, even when the object of it is absent ! How beautiful its appropriating language ! Said David, "*My God, my God.*" And Mary, "*My Lord.*" But I have said, in both cases, the object in whom their affections centred was for the moment absent. As to the Psalm :—" I have lost," said the Psalmist, " what my soul was wont to realize—the sense of Thy power and Thy glory."

“Nevertheless, God,” he says, “is still *my* God.” David’s intelligence was far beyond that of Mary’s. Mary could only stand beside the empty tomb, and exclaim mournfully, “They have taken away my Lord, and *I know not where they have laid Him.*” David, on the contrary, says, “It is true my soul has lost, for a season, the light of His presence; but through it all, God is *my* God; and if I can only once get to the sanctuary, I shall see His power and His glory as I *have* seen it there.” And then, he adds, knowing God’s purpose concerning him—“But *the king* shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by Him shall glory.” How beautiful! David the exile! David the fugitive! David chased from his rightful inheritance, and hunted as a partridge upon the mountains! Yet he could say anticipatively, “The *king* shall rejoice in God.” To the eye of sense how ridiculous! But as the language of faith, how beautiful! As though he had said, “It is true, I am far from my home, and from my kingdom now, I am *not* a king now; but wait till I *am* a king; and then *the king* shall rejoice in God.” Words spoken, it

may be, amid the solitudes of the cave, as Mary's plaint was, amid the solitude of the garden.

How does love delight in its object when present ! And how does it pine for it absent ! What a picture of this we have here, in this 20th of John. There is something so inexhaustibly precious in it. It seems always fresh—always discovering new beauties. There is something akin to it in the 36th Psalm, where it is said, “ They shall be *abundantly satisfied*.” Mary, on seeing the Lord, was satisfied, *abundantly satisfied*. She *drank* of the river of His pleasure, and was satisfied.

As some of us have been reminded, there is scarcely a saint but may find His likeness in this 20th of John.

First, we have Mary, loving and longing, but not happy ; full of love to her Lord ; but ignorant of resurrection. Her affections were far before her knowledge : her love was deep ; but her intelligence dull.

But whilst such was Mary's position, Peter and John were lacking in both intelligence and love.

They could go back to their homes, content not to know what had become of Him.

Thomas, again, could not believe, until he had *seen* Him.

In Mary, then, we see a saint full of love ; but lacking knowledge. Peter and John become cold, as to love. They are content to go away from the sepulchre. Circumstances, or worldly occupations, or engagements, had stronger hold on them.

Thomas, like the Jew, will not believe except he see Him, and hear Him saying, "I am Jesus—I am Messiah." Thomas personates Israel ; Mary, the Church. For what said the Lord to Mary ? He never said to her, as He did to others, "Go, tell My brethren that they go into Galilee ; there shall they see Me." Oh no ! not so to Mary, for *Galilee* was not the meeting-place for His Church, but *heaven* ! Tell them : "I ascend unto *My Father* and *your Father* ; unto *My God* and *your God*." Heaven, dear friends, and not Galilee, is the place where His Church, in risen life, can now see and know Him. *Our place of meeting is no earthly scene, but yonder, yonder—with His*

Father and *our* Father, with *His* God and *our* God.

We may well meditate on these three conditions of soul pictured before us here. And first on Mary's deep love. What was it that had so drawn out her love? What had brought her so early that morning to the sepulchre? What had plunged her soul in such grief? Ah! she owed much. For out of her the Lord had cast seven devils: He had broken her galling fetters, and had set her free. She had never before been such a woman as she now was. Since she had known Jesus, she was so changed, so happy, and therefore she so loved! Oh! (shall I say it?) I often envy such seven-devil sinners, set free, and brought into glorious liberty. Not that there is any difference in reality between the respectable sinner and the profligate sinner. You understand me. It was the very same deliverance for Noah, in all his intelligence, as for his sons, who were in less intelligence. And as to the world under the flood, they were all equally lost; their own differences as to *themselves* made no account with God; being sinners, they all equally perished. But when lifted, as some

are, out of such depths—when raised out of a seven-devil condition—when plucked from the very burning—oh, what love ! what gratitude ! what joy ! what delight in the Deliverer !

Like the soldier at Gibraltar, who, when dying, full of desire for his Lord, could say, “Oh, I am dying ; but I am happy, happy, happy—for I am going to thank Him to His face !”

There is deepest love when there has been the deepest conscience of sin, and the deepest sense of deliverance. Oh, those stony-ground hearers ! It was all joy—no sense of sorrow ; an evanescent joy—the birth of an hour, and gone in an hour. Not so with this daughter of Magdala. She had known what it was to smart under the galling chains of sin’s cruel bondage ; and she had come to her Deliverer well-nigh crushed beneath the load ; and she had known what it was to rejoice in a great deliverance.

But there was more. It was not merely that she had had *deliverance*—she knew the *Deliverer* ! She had a Deliverer round whom all her affections *had entwined*, and towards whom she had felt the

deepest, most intense devotion. No wonder she could not do without Him ; no wonder that nothing in the world could satisfy when He was absent !

How precious is all this, beloved ! But how could she have been so ignorant of resurrection ? Had she never heard of His rising again the third day ? Had she not been told of what He said of Jonas, and of the Temple ? Oh ! is there anything in our own poor hearts like this ? Some predominating feeling in our souls, in its sway over us, preventing our completeness of knowledge ? I need not explain. Only One was ever absolutely complete. You know, the meat-offering was of *fine* flour ; telling so beautifully that in our Lord no one grace or characteristic unduly preponderated, no one feature assumed a proportion which hindered the full expression of other features. Like the fine flour, there were no inequalities ; His character was one harmonious combination of all that was perfect,—one equal manifestation of *every* grace and excellence. But in His saints, how different, beloved.

Said Mary, “I want *my Lord*,” meaning Christ *dead*.

Her whole soul was moved by one consuming passion for *Him*. She would bear Him away if she could find Him! She forgot all else; she was unconscious of all else; the angels at the sepulchre neither dazzled nor affrighted her. If all the angels in heaven had come down, it would have made no difference. Like David, she could have said, "My soul longeth, thirsteth to see Thee." She thought not of His *words*—only of *Himself*! Oh! this is love occupied with its object, with a person! How blessed for us here, beloved, with a brighter intelligence, to come to the *Lord*; not to one another, but to *Himself*; not so much to get *from* Him, as to enjoy *Himself*. Though surely, if we have *Him*, He will give to us. He will feed us from out of His own hand.

Oh! to have Him—to have Him *at all*, beloved, is enough.

Have you never known yourself thus, with the mere presence of a friend? Even without a word or a look, simply satisfied with his *presence*? Have you never *known* a mother who had received from a far country *her invalided son*, satisfied, happy at the thought of

simply having him? There he is on the couch, and she is watching beside him. He is asleep—not a word—not a look from him; it matters not; he is in the room; he is in her presence; she has *him*; and it is enough; she is satisfied. Now Mary wanted Jesus like that. She said, “They have taken away my Lord;” “I’ll be content if only I may have *Him*; I want *my Lord*.” And as to yourselves, you have had a loved guest in your house;—he was weary, resting on the couch, would you wake him? No, indeed; it was pleasant to feel he was under the same roof; it was enough to know he was in your own home. Delightful was it, after His onerous work, for the Bethany circle to entertain their Lord; for the present there was no tear—no burden. He was there in rest—it was enough to see Him, and say, “*He is here*.” Oh! I love the *silence* even, which sometimes occurs in our assemblies, whilst we simply sit in communion with the Lord—when no sentiment spoken—no word uttered—one sits calmly, blessedly enjoying His presence only, saying, “He is here. He is in this place.” Ah, yes! silent worship is sweet. The flesh may

not like it. The spirit only can profit by it. And as to a scene like this, if I sit here, and, sweet as a hymn may be, if no hymn is sung, or thought expressed, my heart is satisfied with *His presence*. For the time, I want nothing more; *He* wants nothing more; He comes where His *saints* are, for this very end, that we may give Him our remembrance; our love—our affections. What a significance was there in that act, when Jesus walked into the Temple, and looked round, and then left it,—as much as to say, “There is nothing for Me here.” There is much for Him where His presence is realized. Oh! for a divine forgetfulness of all else but Himself.

In the county of Clare, a dear brother suggested, —“Did it ever strike you that Mary told all to *the gardener* in reply to his question, ‘Woman, why weepest thou?’” She told *him* about the absent One; she asked *him* for her Lord. She said, “They have taken my Lord away.” She told all to the gardener, as she supposed Him to be. The same with *the angels*. But when it is obviously *Jesus* who *speaks and says*, “*Mary*”—when He reveals Himself

to her, she does not speak a word, but only "Master." There was no need to tell *Him* whom she sought; nor to inform *Him* why she wept. Oh! no, no, beloved; her once sorrowful, but now joyful face—her tears—her look of joy, of love, told *Him* enough.

It was different with the two disciples. They, alas! were content, as I have said, to go back to their homes without *Him*. Their homes, it would seem, had a stronger claim than either a dead or a living Christ,—some business, or perhaps they expected callers! and so they turned back, not knowing whether Jesus was dead or alive. How is it with each of us, as to this? Ah! the world has a wonderful power—circumstances have a wonderful power—arrangements have a wonderful power—and very often, alas! we can too contentedly leave *Him* for these.

Then we come to Thomas, a picture of His own Israel. Said Thomas, "I'll not believe unless I see *Him*." And Israel, too, will not believe, until He appears before their very eyes, as their own Messiah. And then, when they see *Him*, they will say,—not

“My Father,” as Jesus said to Mary (type of the church), “I ascend unto my *Father*, and your *Father* ;” but as Thomas, “My *Lord*—my *God*.” For Israel will then know Him as *Lord* and *God* ; and not, as in risen life, we now know Him, where He is in heaven, gone to *His Father*, and *our Father*, to *His God* and *our God*.

But one thought more. The disciples having gathered together on the testimony of *Mary*, He appeared to them that same evening. He found them all blessedly, sweetly ready, according to that 22nd Psalm, “I will declare Thy Name unto *My brethren* ; in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee.” They believed the testimony of *Mary* ; they were compelled to come. He was there in their very midst ; and He is *here*, beloved, in our midst. Ah ! then let us gather our hearts’ affections all around Himself—our blessed One ! having the Object of our love in the same place, in the same *room* with ourselves. How happy to know Him, and to own Him, and to *worship* and praise Him ! Surely we can say with *Jacob*, in that wondrous, comprehensive prayer of

his, so precious, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant." And may we not add, "And of all *the truth* which Thou hast showed?" We must surely feel this; "*all the truth*"—what truth!—wondrous, deep, eternal truth, concerning Him who is now with us. Are we not filled, yea, full to overflowing, as to the letter or intelligence of the truth? But now are you saying, "I want Him—I want the Object of my deepest love"? O beloved, if so, see our advantage over her of the 20th of John; we have not to seek for the living among the dead, nor yet for the dead among the living, for He has assured us of His presence here. We may cease our enquiring, our seeking, and sweetly let our souls give way to a full, long, happy enjoyment of His presence, and then, as in the 36th Psalm, we shall be "*satisfied—satisfied.*" Mary was "*satisfied*;" the disciples were "*satisfied.*" Nay, on His ascension, when going from them, so much were they satisfied, that they returned to Jerusalem with *great joy*.

Now, their knowledge and their love were one—

the truth had done its work—the Person had lost none of its power, since the truth had taken them out of their ignorance of His resurrection. Thus blessedly, beloved, do all these Scriptures agree, all ending in this : “satisfied, satisfied”—“*abundantly satisfied.*”

NEARING THE GLORY.

WHEN on brink of Jordan's river,
Israel's mighty legions stood ;
Earth was silent, thinking never
What was in the mind of God ;
How those legions,
Soon would penetrate that flood.
All the nations round were sleeping,
Sleeping on the verge of doom ;
Whilst the Lord in love was keeping
Watch o'er Israel—every one.
Oh ! what wonders,
Witnessed how He led them home !
Thus the Son will come from heaven,
When no stranger eye will see,
Just as when the flood was riven
By the ark in secrecy ;
How we're gathered,
Satan nor the world will see.

Israel stood by Jordan's river,
Ere the ark had led the way,
But believed the Lord would never,
Long their full deliverance stay :
Thus we're waiting
For our great redemption day.

Soon they saw the ark descending,
Nations still as very stone,
Jordan at its highest rending,
Leading to their Canaan home :
Thus with Jesus,
When He comes to take His own.

Just beyond the surging river,
Lo ! their long-loved Canaan stood ;
Israel never could be nearer,
Parted only by the flood.
Soon the glory !
Once is heard the trump of God.

Oh ! what grace that ark delaying,
Ling'ring near the rolling flood ;

In that respite God was staying
 Darkest vengeance of His rod ;
 Thus the sinner,
Refuge finds through Jesus' blood.

We are in the waste remaining,
 Till the day of grace is o'er ;
Sinners who believe obtaining
 Refuge till the latest hour ;
 Jordan opened,
And we linger here no more.

On the one side is the desert,
 Which for long the Church hath trod ;
On the other is our Canaan,
 Country of our Saviour God.
 Come, Lord Jesus !
Come divide the swelling flood !

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